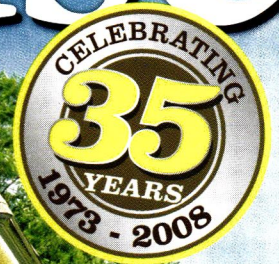


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# Features

May/June 2008

Volume 36/ Number 3

Established 1973

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By DEMETRA APOSPOROS

During the Victorian era, wood shingles became a *tour de force* decorative element used to dress up a variety of houses, but they made the biggest impression on Queen Annes.

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By RAY TSCHOEPE

Epoxy glues can be intimidating (you have to measure and mix them yourself), but there are plenty of reasons why they're the best fit for a range old-house projects, as our expert explains.

## 50 The Stucco Brigade

By STEVE JORDAN

A team of pros tackles a stucco repair job that's proven—time and again—hard to make stick. Follow along with them and learn some tricks of the trade.

## 54 Clay Today, and Tomorrow Too

By JANE POWELL

Clay roof tiles aren't just for Spanish-style houses—in a wide variety of shapes, colors, and styles, they have appeared on everything from bungalows to Tudors. With a little TLC, they can last 100 years or more.

## 60 The Glass Menagerie

By CLARE MARTIN

Repairing broken window glass doesn't have to be a pain. There are plenty of modern options for making old windows whole again, while keeping them looking their age.

## 66 Saving the Soffit

By JOHN LEEKE

Sooner or later, all soffits need saving. Our expert shows how to assess damage, map repairs, and replace rotten wood in easy-to-follow steps.

## 68 Old-House Living: Humrich Maneuver

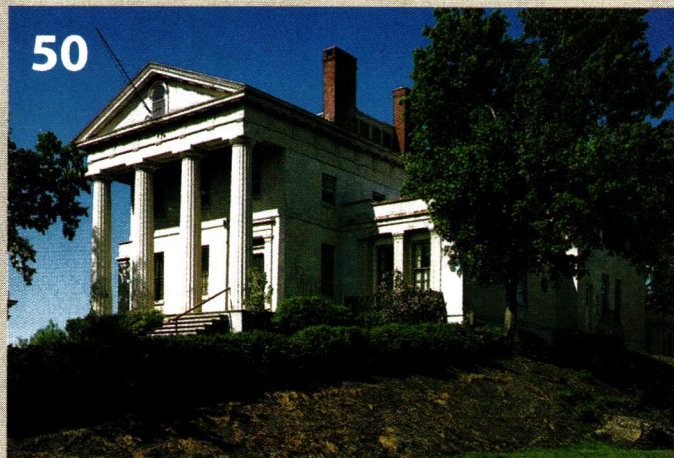
By LEE BEY

Chicago's mid-century modern houses increasingly encounter the wrecking ball. Meet a young couple who bucked the trend to save one.

## 72 Style: Ranch Days

By JAMES C. MASSEY & SHIRLEY MAXWELL

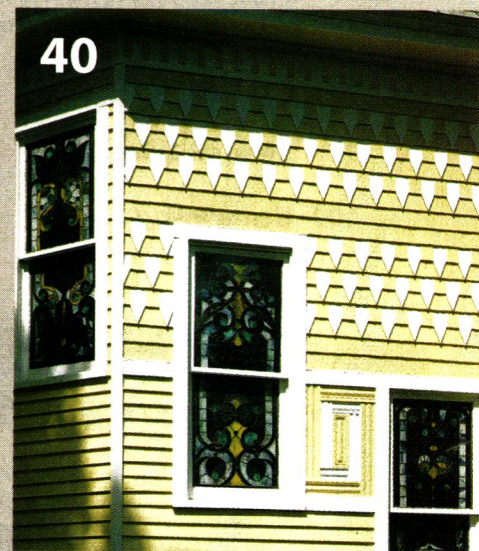
Ranch houses, those omnipresent postwar dwellings, just hit the mid-century mark, and in doing so, garnered historic status and a new troop of admirers.



### ON THE COVER:

Decorative shingles create a sunny, welcoming exterior on this bright yellow Queen Anne house in Rochester, New York, which was built by a master carpenter in 1887.

Photo by Andy Olenick.





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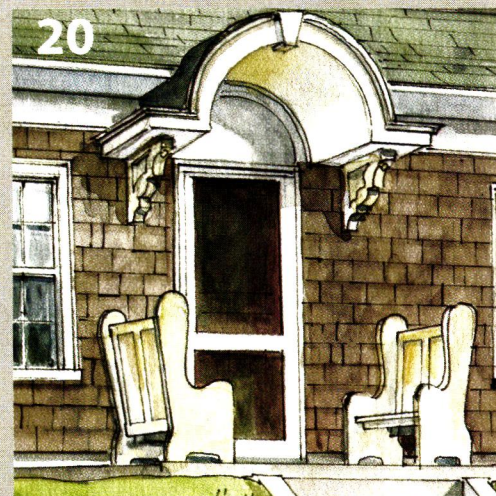
By GORDON BOCK

Charles E. Fisher of the National Park Service discusses preservation's move into the mainstream.

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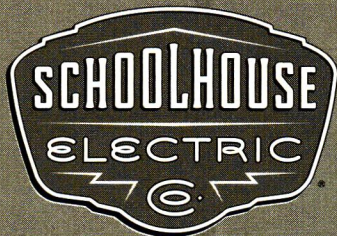
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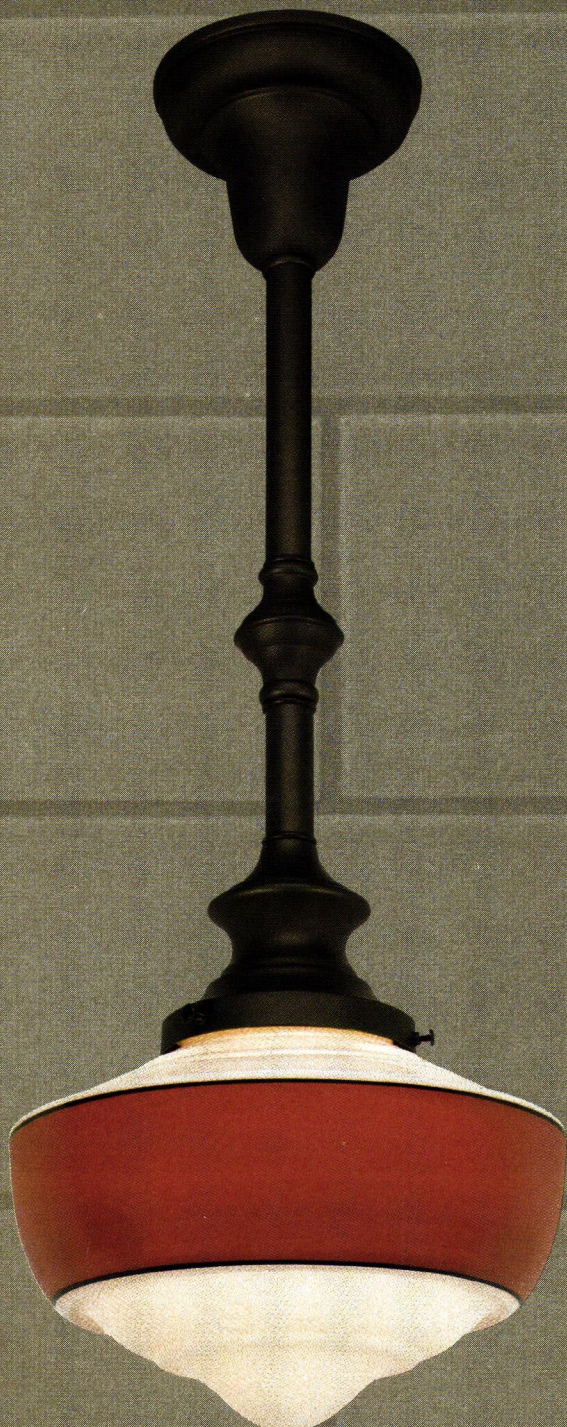
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## Dallas Stars

Dallas has more to offer than just the fictional Ewing family—it's also a hotbed of historic homes in a range of styles. The Spanish Eclectic house opening our story on clay roof tiles (above), designed by local architect Clifford Hutsell for his own use in the 1920s, is but one grand early 20th-century example. Get more background on the historic neighborhoods of Dallas, courtesy of Architecturally Significant Homes, on our web site.

## Home, Home on the Ranch

Want to outfit your mid-century marvel, but aren't sure which furnishings are the best fit? We've got a few suggestions for you, from the decade's famous names to some present-day, era-appropriate offerings.

## The Man Behind the Curtain

If you're impressed with the low-slung, rambling house in this issue's Old-House Living story and want to know more about the man who dreamed it up, check out our quick study on Chicago-area architect Edward Humrich.

## The Tile Top Ten

Think you know your notable tile-roofed buildings? Check yourself against our Top Ten list, where The Grove Park Inn is but one of many memorable names.





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# Editor's Page

## Moving On

For the past 17 wonderful years, I've been privileged to write to you on this page as editor-in-chief of *Old-House Journal*. But life is about change—and my new role will be as editor-at-large.

As you know, none of us ever really owns an old house; we're just careful stewards for a stretch of time. Being at the helm of a magazine is, in many ways, the same thing. OHJ has had three editors in 35 years: Clem Labine, who in 1973 had the vision to unite a diverse network of old-house restorers with a highly original publication; Patricia Poore, my mentor, whose creativity nurtured OHJ into a content-rich, four-color magazine with a wider reach; and yours truly. We build on the work of those who came before us, and I am indebted to them both.

It's easy to assume that editing a magazine is only about what's in the editor's head—some sort of personal expression—but the reality is quite the opposite. In fact, it's like being a preacher, speaking to a large congregation all at once, but in such a way that every individual is gifted with a message that relates to them personally. Your many letters and e-mails—telling us that we always have an article or two about one of your current projects—are the highest compliments.

I'm the first to say that magazines are a team effort, and what makes OHJ special is the sharing of like-minded ideas and discoveries from many quarters. Over the years, I have come to esteem OHJ's regular contributors as friends as well as colleagues. But even more cherished are OHJ's devoted readers. One of my most memorable experiences is putting together a large feature on concrete block houses of the 1910s. The entire article was based solely upon scores of remarkable photos, archival materials, and oral histories—all submitted by readers. It's this kind of close relationship that makes the solitary craft of editing all worthwhile.

I'm happy to leave the editing duties in good hands. OHJ's new editor will be Demetra Aposporos, who's currently our senior editor. Demetra is passionate about old homes, and she brings a wealth of publishing experience to the magazine—including more than a decade at *National Geographic*. Perhaps most important, she will listen to your ideas, understand your concerns, and inspire you through every project. In short, the magazine will continue to thrive under Demetra's leadership.

What will I be up to in the future? For one thing, I'll continue to contribute to the magazine and consult with the editorial staff while I pursue some new professional goals. For another, I'll be working on and playing with my old houses. Besides a vernacular family homestead in Pennsylvania (my eternal old-house project), I live in an 1880s Queen Anne in Silver Spring, Maryland, with a surprising architectural connection. For decades, it was home to the descendants of A.B. Mullett, the Victorian architect who ignited the Second Empire style in America. If you're ever in the Washington, D.C., area, don't hesitate to come by. (I'll likely be hanging off a ladder somewhere.) Or even better, drop a line to me at [gbock@oldhousejournal.com](mailto:gbock@oldhousejournal.com) or [www.bocktalk.com](http://www.bocktalk.com). I'll be enjoying the wonders of old houses, and I wish the same to you.



ALISON SHEEHY PHOTO

*Gordon Bock*

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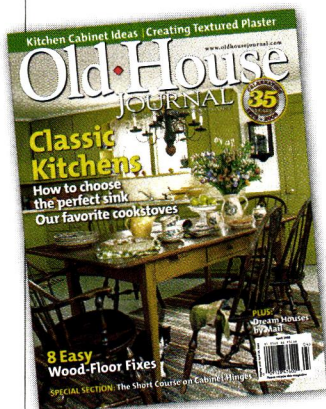
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# Letters



## Two More Sink Tales

Like Lynn Elliott in "A Tale of Two Sinks" [March/April 2008], I opted for a Shaw's fireclay farmhouse sink when renovating the kitchen of my 1914 American Foursquare. When friends came to visit in the middle of the renovation, they saw the sink on the floor and asked if it was too late to return it. If only I had listened. These sinks have a completely flat bottom, so they never thoroughly drain.

I must always use the edge of my hand as a squeegee to get anything to flow toward the center.

As a real estate agent in an area with many old houses, I've seen plenty of renovated kitchens where owners have also chosen this type sink. Without exception, each has told me they have the same problem. The sink looks great, but my advice would be to seek out a sink with a similar look, but modern design.

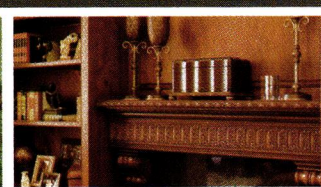
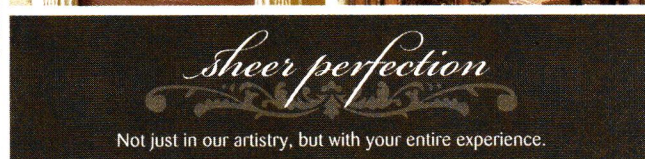
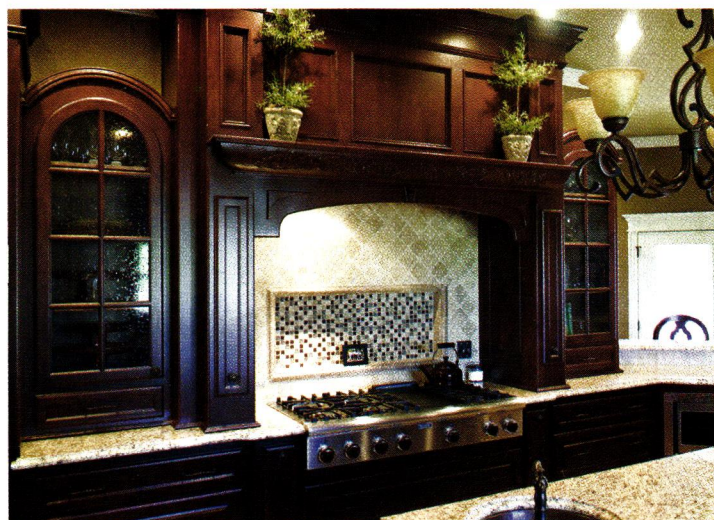
Jeff Masarek  
Atlanta, Georgia



"A Tale of Two Sinks" was of great interest to me, as my wife and I have just finished a restoration of our 1927 Craftsman bungalow. While restoring the kitchen (above, before), we considered a vintage sink and even bought a 1926 single-drainboard sink, but we could not get anyone to re-porcelanize it, so it was relegated to the garden.

I really wanted a backsplash sink to replace the original unit. Lynn Elliott mentions her trouble in locating an appropriate sink with a backsplash, and I have to admit, I had the same problem. But I prevailed, and discovered that Kohler

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## Letters



produces a farm sink with a full vintage-style backsplash. An unexpected advantage in using the new sink is that the drain, which is much larger than drains in older sinks, will accommodate a modern garbage disposal.

We now have a small but very useful period kitchen [above], with a period-style backsplash sink, butcher block countertops and a 1930s base cabinet to offset our 1920s Sterling gas stove.

Larry Miceli  
Mount Dora, Florida

### Mystery Solved!

A regular OHJ contributor noticed Tammy Zimmerman's question about rosette-block molding ["Letters," March/April 2008] and wrote in with this explanation of the style:

The molding Ms. Zimmerman writes about first makes its appearance with the arrival of Grecian (Greek Revival) influences in the 1820s, and is generally characterized by symmetrically molded trim boards with square blocks at the top corners.

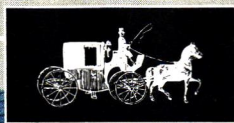
The fancier the house, the more elaborate the trim—in its simplest version, this trim consists of plain boards and corner blocks. As the house trim becomes richer, the boards become more elaborately molded (sometimes to the point of having to be built up of two or more pieces), as do the corner blocks. Round turnings are common, frequently repeating the profile of the molding boards. I have seen blocks with carved rosettes and floral ornaments as well.

This style of trim lasted well into the 20th century. Because it was so long-lived and so popular, this type of woodwork is not particularly useful in trying to diagnose building style.

Allen Charles Hill, AIA  
Woburn, Massachusetts

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## Calendar

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May 3

CORONA, CA

### Vintage Home Tour

In addition to a self-guided tour of Corona's architectural gems, this year's event will feature a display of antique automobiles. Tickets are \$15 in advance, or \$18 the day of the tour. (951) 371-5291; [www.coronahistory.org](http://www.coronahistory.org)

May 10-11

FORT WORTH, TX

### Fairmount Home Tour

The 26th annual tour of Fairmount (the largest historic district in the Southwest) will feature six restored homes, plus a few restorations in progress, that showcase the neighborhood's architectural diversity. [www.historicfairmount.com](http://www.historicfairmount.com)

May 15-17

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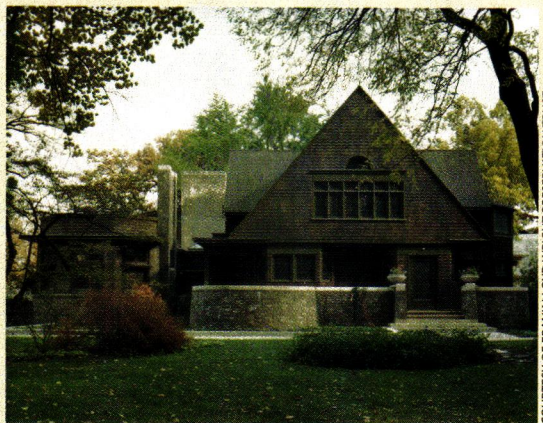
"We the People" is this year's theme, as the AIA examines the impact of architecture on the public. Entrance to the AIA Expo, which features products from more than 800 companies, is free. (800) 242-3837; [www.aiaconvention.com](http://www.aiaconvention.com)

May 17-18

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## Walk a Mile in Wright's Shoes

With hallmarks of Frank Lloyd Wright's vision immortalized in buildings across the country, it's not hard to get a glimpse of his work in the wild. But it's for those looking for a complete immersion in the architect's surroundings that the Wright Plus weekend, held May 15-17 in Oak Park, Illinois, was designed. The centerpiece of the event is an interpretive architectural walking tour through Wright's own home (left) and seven other neighborhood gems, two of which

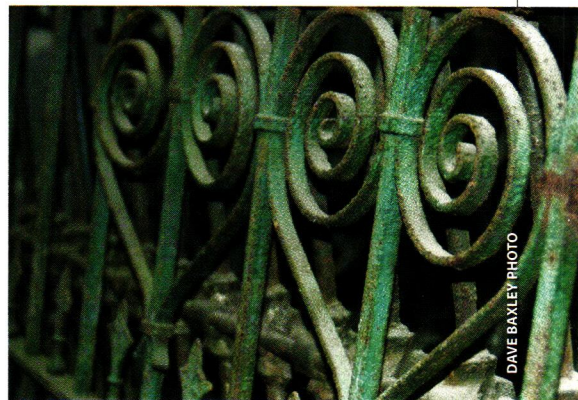
(the Wright-designed Oscar B. Balch House and the colonial-era Butler W. Firman House) were previously closed to the public. Other weekend events include an excursion to take in both Wright's Muirhead Farmhouse and Mies Van der Rohe's Farnsworth House, as well as a breakfast and behind-the-scenes tour of Wright's iconic Robie House. Weekend packages (including lodging at Oak Park's historic Carleton Hotel) are \$1,250 for members of the Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust, and \$1,350 for non-members. Separate tickets can be purchased for the walking tour (\$75 for members; \$90 for non-members) and other events. For more information, call (877) 848-3559, or visit [www.gowright.org](http://www.gowright.org).

## New Life for Old House Parts

When it's not possible to save an old house, there's the next best thing: recycling or salvaging the materials in it. Spurred by the green-building push to reduce waste—it's estimated that construction and demolition (C&D) debris accounts for anywhere from 20 to 45 percent of the waste stream in North America—states such as California, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire have spearheaded legislation that mandates homeowners to do just that. In addition, according to Brad Guy, president of the Building Materials Reuse Association (BMRA), "Every residential green building program I'm aware of has some form of 'materials' category that includes combinations of C&D waste diversion and the use of reused and/or recycled-content building materials—and many are increasingly becoming part of local ordinances."

Some of these programs are even historically minded. In Regina, Canada, for example, the Heritage Building Materials Strategy focuses on salvaging items from historic buildings. Members of the community can apply to reuse these materials on their own projects.

Programs without a historical bent still spell good news for old-house owners, as they increase the market for both architectural salvage and recycled components (such as reclaimed wood




**C&D recycling ordinances boost the market for salvage materials, such as this iron railing from The Brass Knob in Washington, D.C.**

flooring) that are a natural fit for old-house renovations. The BMRA maintains a state-by-state database of architectural salvage outposts on its web site ([www.buildingreuse.org](http://www.buildingreuse.org)), or you can check out directories like the 2007-2008 *Guide to Architectural Salvage and Antique Lumber Companies* (published by Architectural Salvage News; [www.architecturalsalvagedirectory.com](http://www.architecturalsalvagedirectory.com)) to find stores in your area.

Beyond more opportunities for salvage, ordinances like these also can help increase awareness of historic preservation, says Brad. "Anything that makes people aware of the problem of destruction and waste in the built environment," he notes, "can help cause a reconsideration for the value embedded in old building materials."





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## Calendar

Chicago's Arts & Crafts show and sale will feature more than 45 dealers of antiques and period-appropriate reproductions. Admission is \$7. (651) 695-1902; [www.artsandcrafts-chicago.com](http://www.artsandcrafts-chicago.com).

May 25-31

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### Prairie Preservation

This Heritage Conservation Network workshop is aimed at preserving the Huttmacher Farmstead, one of the last surviving examples of early stone slab construction. Workshop cost is \$490, not including transportation. (303) 444-0128; [www.heritageconservation.net](http://www.heritageconservation.net)

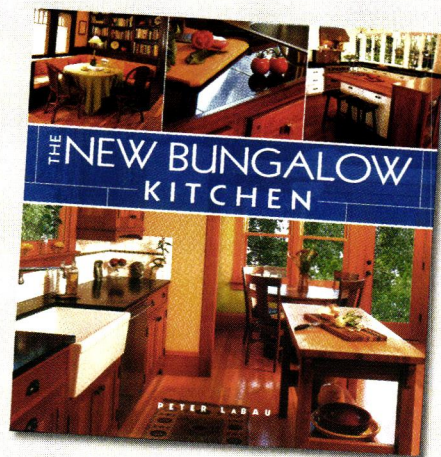
## Books in Brief

Kitchen renovation can be a sore spot for old-house owners: You want to stay true to the historic bones of your house, but the convenience of modern technologies is awfully hard to ignore. Plus, now that the kitchen has become the home's undisputed gathering place, this need for both exquisite form and efficient function is even greater.

Boston-based architect Peter LaBau understands this dilemma. In *The New Bungalow Kitchen*, he demonstrates how Arts & Crafts elements (built-in dining nooks, island-style butcher blocks)

can be used in kitchen design to transform this room from the strictly functional space it was in the early 20th century into the hub of the home it has become today. For more ambitious renovators, LaBau addresses how to re-work traditionally closed-off bungalow kitchens by annexing adjacent porches and closets to add space without altering the home's original footprint.

From an aesthetic standpoint, gorgeous photos of glass-fronted cabinetry, art tile countertops and farmhouse sinks will give you plenty of inspiration—and LaBau details everything from finding and using salvaged materials to incorporating era-appropriate molding and trim. There's also an entire chapter devoted to the appliance dilemma, with equal weight given to restoring old appliances and camouflaging new ones. Like the rest of the book, it strikes the perfect tone between practical and inspirational, with plenty of ideas on how to craft a kitchen that has both a foot in the past and an eye on the future.



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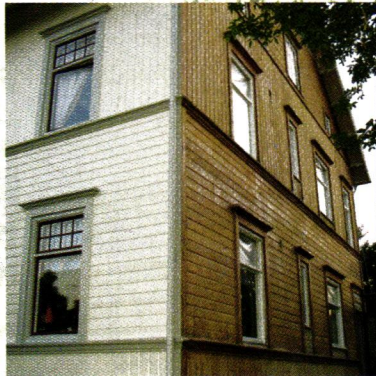
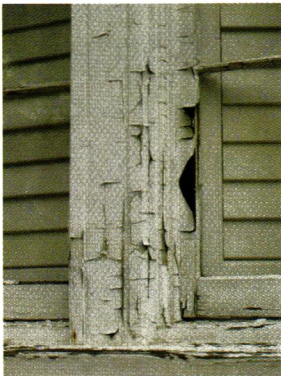
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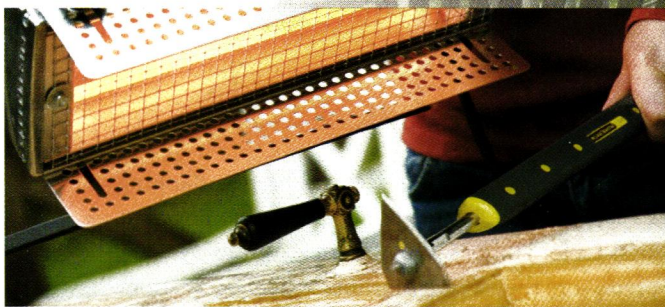


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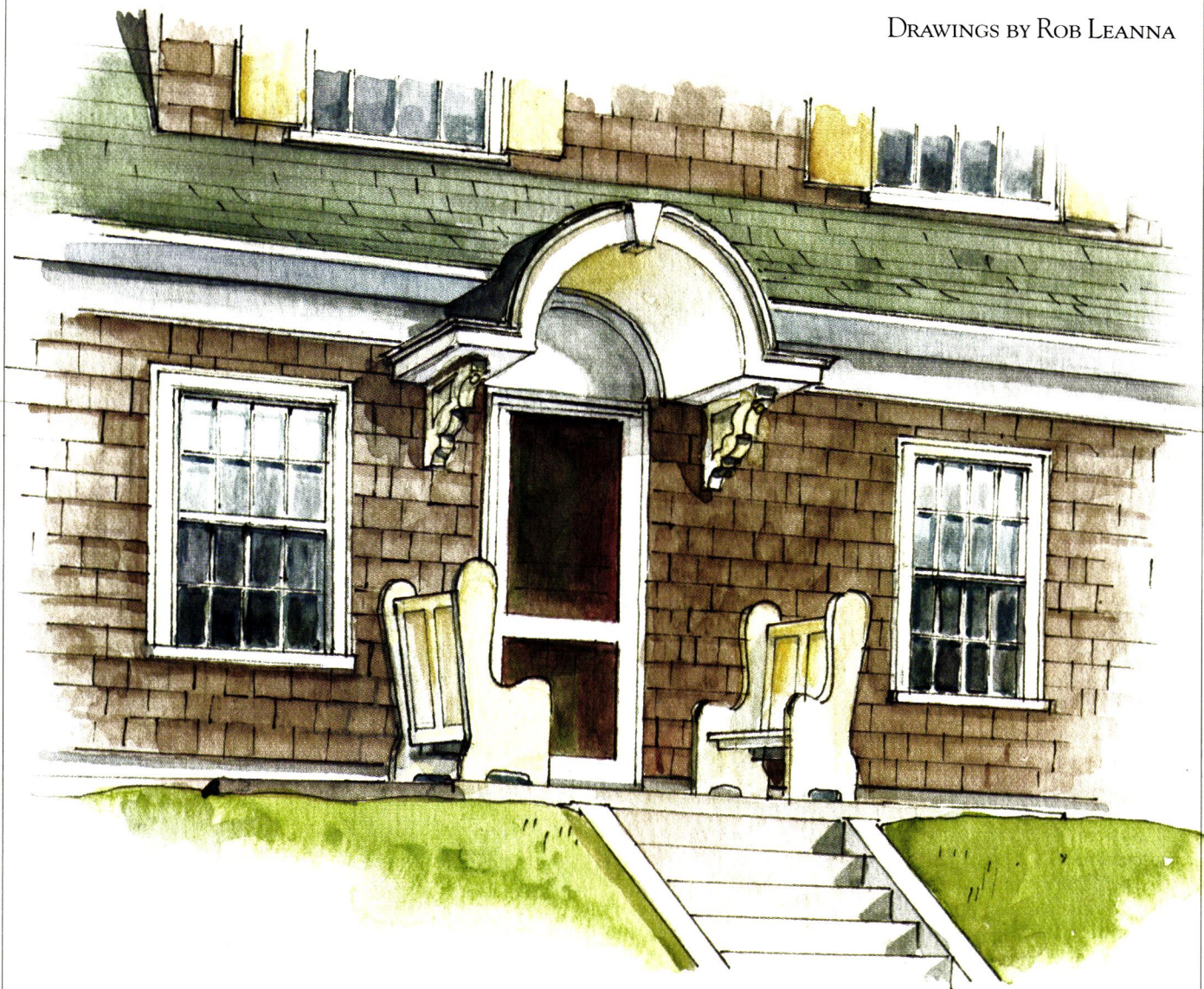


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## Colonial Revival Bench

**Y**ou've probably seen these benches on the front stoop of Colonial Revival houses, flanking either side of the front door. They sometimes appear singly as well. But you may not know that their roots go back to some of the earliest Colonial houses in America. While we can't definitively pin down their original purpose, we're pretty sure they weren't meant for pure decoration, although that's how they evolved in later years. They most likely provided a place for travelers to rest and remove or clean their boots before entering a house. This we do know: They appeared more often on architect-designed houses. In the words of one old-house historian, "The average builder wouldn't use a sophisticated simple thing like that."

On the oldest Colonial houses, original stoop benches have long since deteriorated. But you can tell where they existed by small indentations visible in the brick where either the seat or a side panel had been inset for additional stability. If your house shows such markings, any replacement should align and connect with these marks.

The design is simple. The back is panel and frame, with stiles sized and grooved to embrace panels tightly (back panels also often could have a slight slope to them), while the bench is crafted





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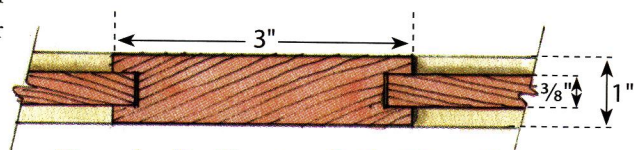
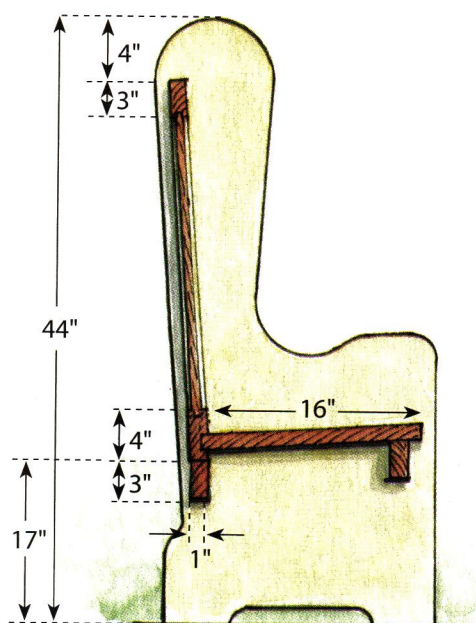
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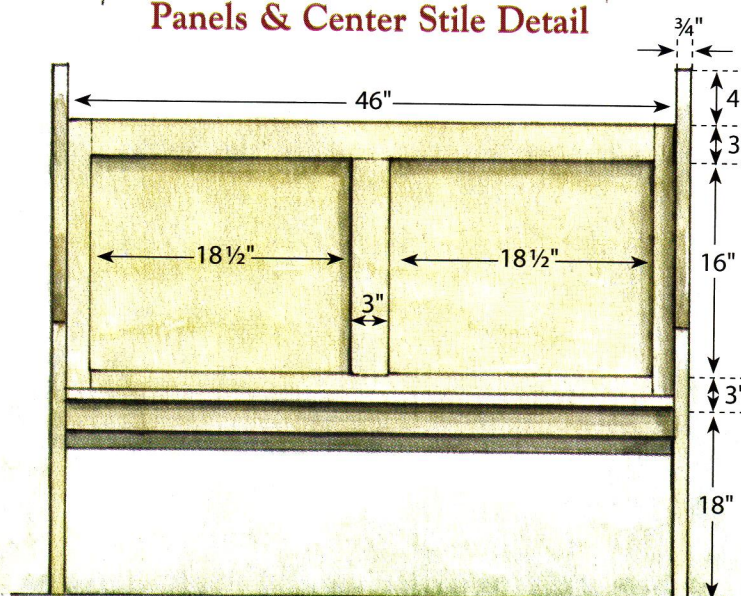


## Plots & Plans

from a single piece of wood. The most interesting design element occurs on the sides, which are cut from a single piece of wood curved seductively around the top and arm portions, ending in two delicate feet. All dimensions are for reference only. 🏠



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Heirloom dahlias create vibrant, rainbow-hued bouquets that are as long-lasting as they are stunning, and now's the time to plant them.

SUZANNE LEWIS PHOTO

## Savoring Dahlias

*These colorful, flamboyant heirloom flowers are meant to be enjoyed with lingering appreciation.* BY SCOTT KUNST

Bungalow gardeners loved them, Victorian gardeners loved them, and long before the Pilgrims landed, Aztec gardeners loved them. Plant a dahlia or two this spring, and I'll bet you will, too.

Dahlias are easy to grow, they make great cut flowers, and they come in a mind-boggling array of colors, shapes, and sizes. And despite what you may have heard, you don't have to dig them up, even if you garden in Alaska. That's right, you can enjoy these easy, gorgeous, tender bulbs without digging them up in the fall. Yes, they'll die if the ground in your region of the country freezes solid—but life's short, and gardening is supposed to be fun. For a few dollars you can have armloads of exciting, historic flowers from mid-summer through fall's

frost, and then some excellent material for the compost pile.

### Dahlia Mania

Dahlias were domesticated by the Aztecs, and first arrived in Europe in 1789. Though simple wildflowers, they contain a wealth of genetic diversity within their DNA. Before long, new colors, forms, and sizes began cropping up, and by 1840 gardeners on both sides of the Atlantic were in the throes of a long-lasting dahlia mania. By the end of the century, some 10,000 named varieties had been introduced, and as late as the 1920s, garden writers were still hailing dahlias as the most popular bulb in America.

Victorian gardeners prized the Ball and Fancy varieties of dahlias, globes of

neatly curled petals arranged so perfectly that it was clear, as Robert Browning wrote, "God's in his Heaven/ All's right with the world." Early 20th-century gardeners, on the other hand, preferred more informal varieties like the mop-headed Cactus dahlias that first appeared in the late 1800s.

Today, after decades of scorn, dahlias are on the rebound. "The style-o-meter has swung 180 degrees," reports trendy *Garden Design* magazine, and "bunches of dahlias now grace the most sophisticated interiors."

### Blooming Beauty

Dahlias bloom exuberantly in the fall, which is another great reason they should grace your garden. They're native to the



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## EIGHT TIMELESS TREASURES

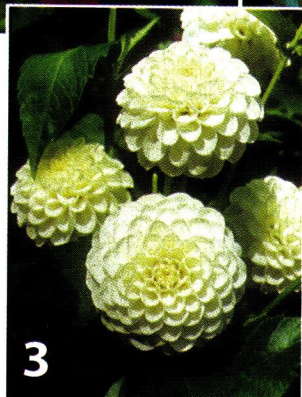
Here are eight of my favorite dahlias to get you started this spring. Choose one to match the era of your house, or plant them all to enjoy more than 200 years of dahlia history in your own back yard.



**1 Dahlia atropurpurea, 1789**  
In the beginning, there was *Dahlia atropurpurea*, with its lacy foliage and profuse, single flowers. It's a dark purple form of *D. pinnata*, one of the first three wild dahlias to reach Europe from Mexico.

**2 Bishop of Llandaff, 1927**  
With dark, burgundy-bronze foliage and scarlet, almost-single flowers highlighted by a ring of yellow stamens, the "Bishop" was one of the first heirloom dahlias to be rediscovered and appreciated anew by modern gardeners.

**3 White Aster, 1879**  
Preserved by a venerable, century-old German nursery, "White Aster" is the world's oldest surviving garden dahlia. A miniature Ball or Pompon, it offers hundreds of small ivory globes set amid lush green foliage.



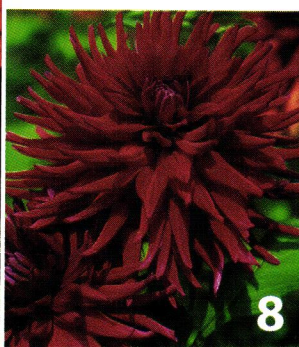
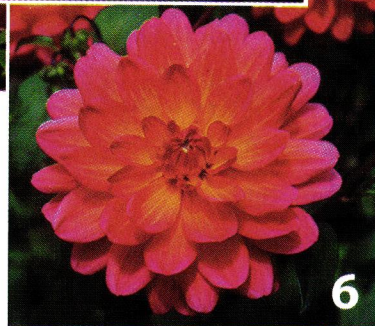
**4 Kidd's Climax, 1940**  
Sure to be on any top-10 list of twentieth-century dahlias, "Kidd's Climax" offers colossal, Dinner-plate-style pink and creamy yellow blooms so excellent that this variety is still winning blue ribbons in dahlia shows across the country.

**5 Kaiser Wilhelm, 1893**  
Neatly curled petals of custard-yellow brushed with burgundy, and a green button eye like an old-fashioned rose define the "Kaiser," a true 1800s Fancy dahlia. It's also the most antique-looking of the half-dozen Victorian dahlias that survive today.



**6 Winsome, 1940**  
As vividly colored as a tropical fish, this mid-century dahlia has palm-sized flowers of a deep, vibrant rose blending into a center of throbbing yellow-orange, reminding us that "antique" doesn't have to mean sedate.

**7 Jersey's Beauty, 1923**  
Once the world's most popular dahlia—one even non-gardeners knew by name—this glorious, true-pink, New-Jersey-bred Formal Decorative is a impressive today as it was nearly 100 years ago. Growing vigorously and tall—up to seven feet—it will give you so many flowers you'll have to give them away.



**8 Juanita, 1949**  
This classic Cactus variety has been one of the world's most popular dahlias for decades. Easy and reliable, it offers big, jewel-toned flowers that are a whirl of narrow, curving, burgundy-red petals.

mountain plateaus of Mexico, where nights are always cool, so at summer's end when temperatures drop and most other plants are winding down, dahlias just keep getting better and better, building up into a thrilling crescendo of blooms.

Dahlias are as diverse as dog breeds, so you're sure to find one you like. Some

varieties are neat and tidy, while others are twisted, shaggy, even frizzy. Some have six petals; some boast hundreds. Pompon varieties are smaller than golf balls, while Dinner-plates can span a foot or more in diameter. And except for blue and black, you can buy dahlias in just about any color, including combinations that range from

dreamy to downright shocking.

As cut flowers, dahlias are stunners. In a vase they'll last up to a week, and the more you harvest them, the more they bloom. The smaller ones mingle well, and few things look more elegant than a single, large dahlia blossom floating in an art-pottery bowl.



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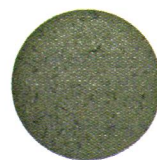
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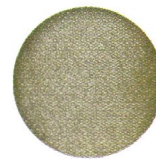
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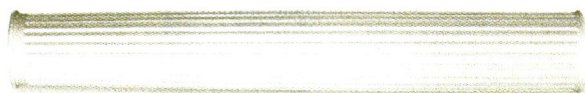
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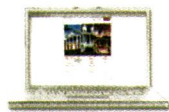
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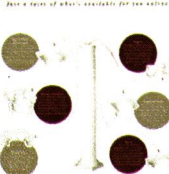
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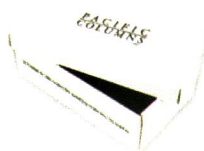
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# Outside the Old House



OLD HOUSE GARDENS PHOTO

Dahlias have been delighting gardeners for centuries. The cover on this 1912 seed catalogue shows a sampling of the many dahlias popular with gardeners at the time.

## Easy Growing

Dahlias are easy to grow; simply plant them in a sunny spot in average- to well-drained soil, water well, and fertilize several times throughout the summer. You'll need to stake them, but staking takes very little time since, unlike tomatoes that tend to sprawl, dahlias really try to grow upright.

Full-size dahlias are usually sold as tubers. These are either "chicken-legs" (traditional, neatly trimmed single tubers from American growers) or "pot roots" (clusters of small tubers from the mass-market Dutch growers). Both grow equally well.

Buy your tubers as early as you can—many suppliers sell out their stock by late April. But wait to plant them until all danger of frost is past and your soil has warmed up thoroughly—about the time you'd plant tomatoes, or even a little later. (To accelerate blooming, start them in pots indoors a few weeks earlier.) To plant, dig each hole about 6" deep, and pound in a sturdy stake. Lay the tuber hori-

zontally and cover with a couple of inches of soil, then wait. Resist the urge to water until sprouts emerge. In most areas, springtime soil will be damp enough to get dahlias growing, and unsprouted tubers in wet soils can rot.

As each plant gets taller, gradually add more soil to the hole. For a bushier plant, pinch out the center once it has three sets of leaves. Water thoroughly all season long, and fertilize lightly every few weeks. Pick lots of bouquets, and deadhead spent flowers to encourage more blooms.

No matter if your house is Adam or Arts & Crafts, dahlias are a surefire way to add a flourish of show-stopping color to your landscape. And now's the time to plant these easy, long-loved flowers for endless bouquets and a glorious fall garden. 🌸

Landscape historian **Scott Kunst** is the owner of Old House Gardens ([www.oldhousegardens.com](http://www.oldhousegardens.com)), a Michigan-based mail order nursery devoted to historic flower bulbs.

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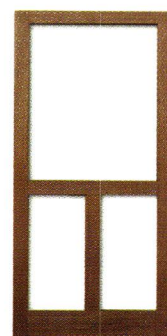
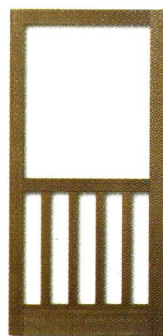
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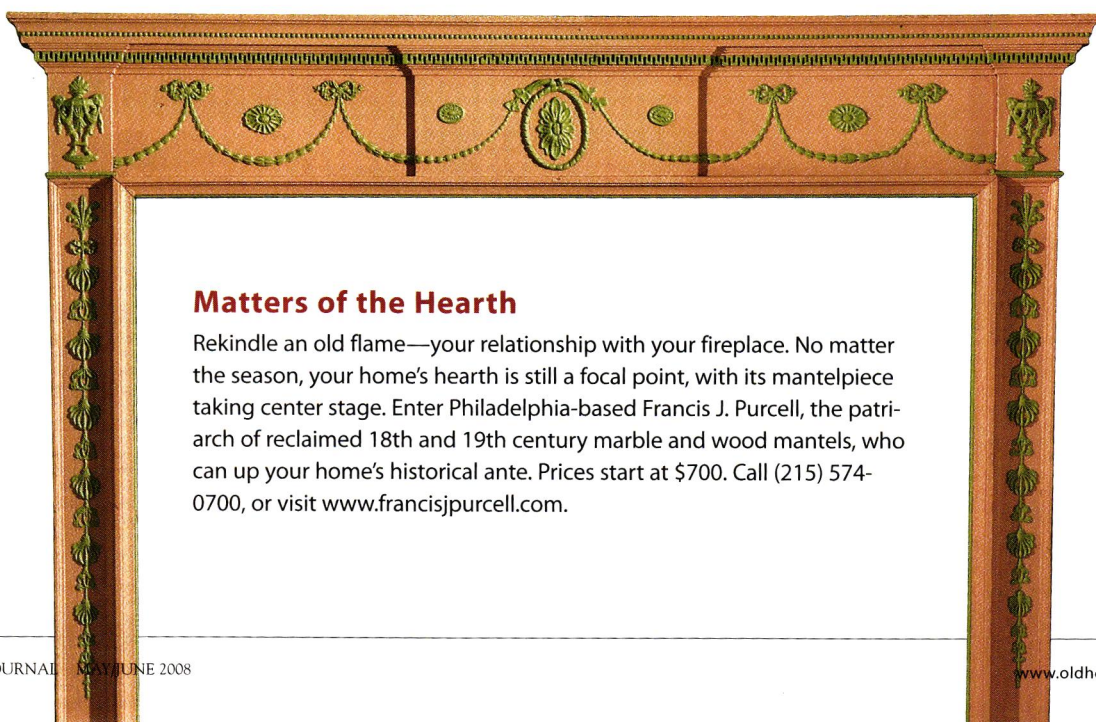
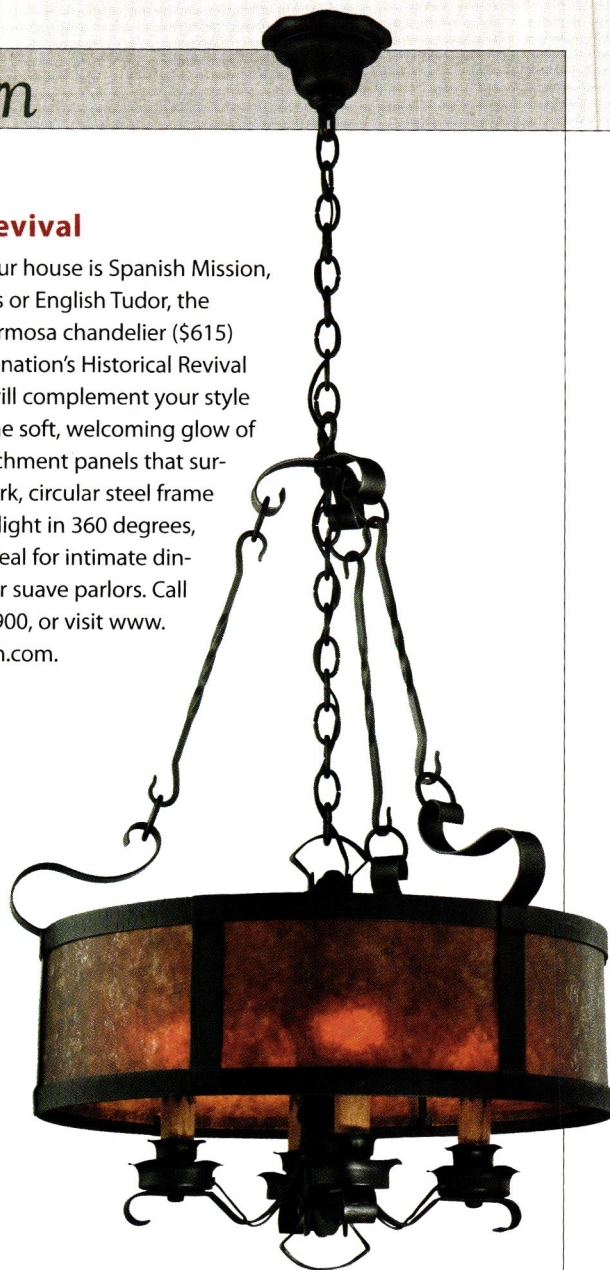


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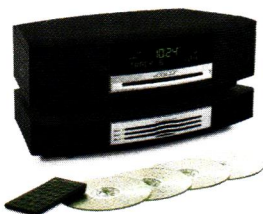


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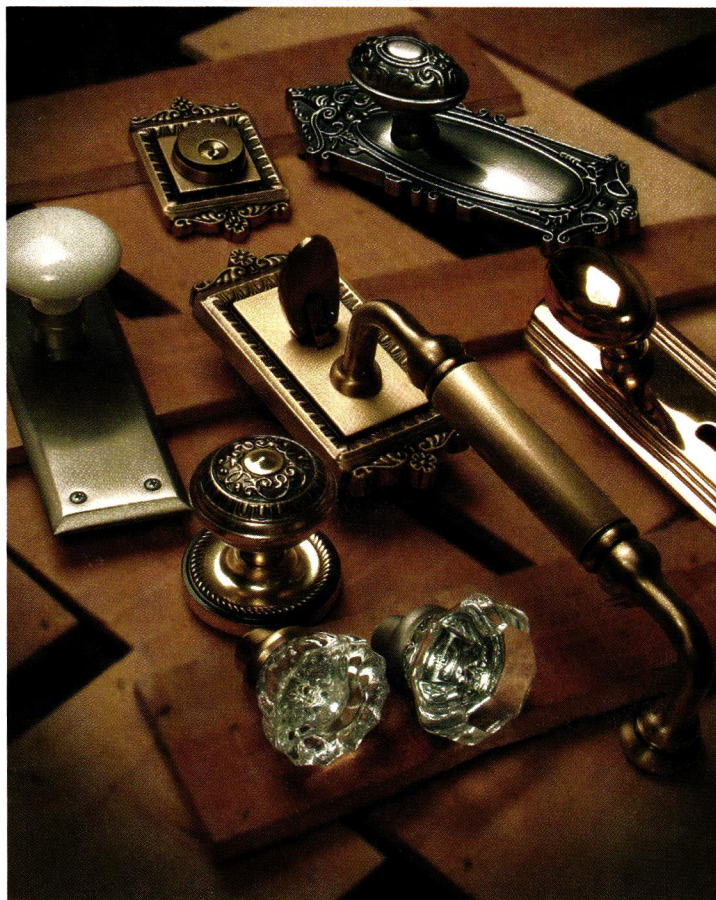




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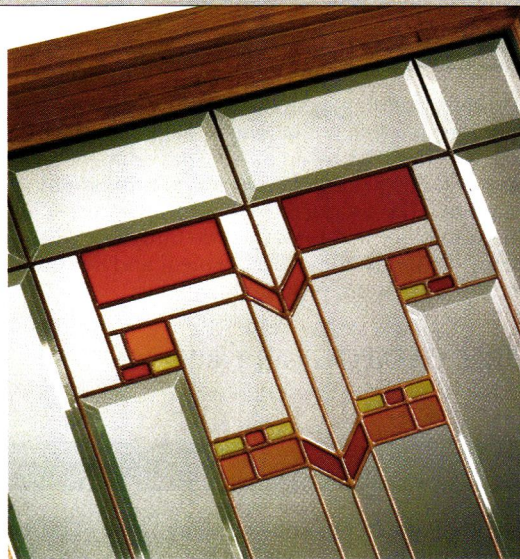
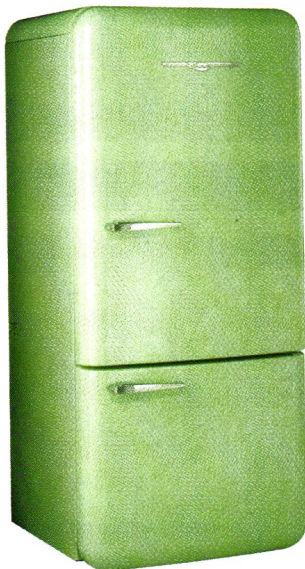
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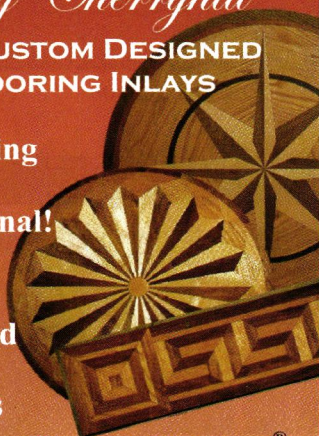
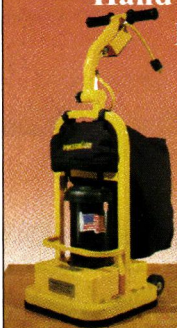
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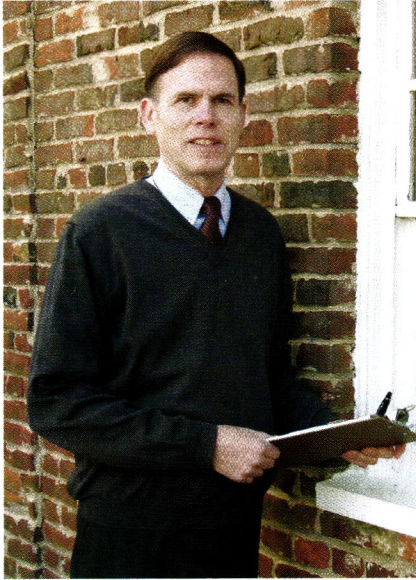
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# 35th Anniversary Interview

As many OHJ readers and restorers of historic buildings know, we owe much of our knowledge about the care of old houses to the Technical Preservation Services office of the National Park Service, which develops hundreds of technical and policy publications on the best practices in historic preservation. For this issue's 35th Anniversary Interview, we chatted with Charles E. Fisher, editor of the acclaimed Preservation Briefs and Preservation Tech Notes series and a leading authority on historic windows, whose broad view of the preservation movement is based on 35 years of experience with the National Park Service as well as a long association with OHJ and its role as a service publication.



**Gordon Bock:** What's your take on the growing interest in houses of the 1950s? At 50 or more years old, they're now technically old houses, but is that their main attraction?

**Charles Fisher:** During much of the past 35 years, the new field in historic houses was the early 20th century. Now we are seeing similar interest in post-World War II housing. Will 1950s ranch houses have the same appeal that Victorian houses did 35 years ago, or that 1920s bungalows have now? Well, for one thing, ranch houses can be quite affordable to buy, and they can be reasonably furnished with pieces from their period. Compare that with, say, a Federal-style house—you might be able to buy the building, but could you afford a lot of 200-year-old furniture, too? For another thing, you can find ranches that have had only one owner and are still in pretty origi-

nal condition. Plus, ranch houses are common in neighborhoods within an easy commuting distance of job centers, and you don't need a tall ladder to clean their gutters.

**GB:** In the 1990s we saw the old-house movement go mainstream and inspire a flurry of magazines and TV shows. Do you think they've had an effect?

**CF:** The widespread interest in historic houses today presents a potential market, so companies are offering more products and materials specifically intended to duplicate original historic house parts, or at least match their visual qualities. At the same time, the remodeling industry and the popular media have fostered the notion of quick transformation in home renovation—the ultimate example being, perhaps, the “Extreme Makeover” show. With all this emphasis on dramatic

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## 35th Anniversary Interview

change through replacement instead of repair, it's easy to lose sight of the importance of preserving, maintaining, and repairing historic materials and features.

Why should we be concerned with more than just looks? Because it's the historic materials of a building that help convey its overall integrity, as well as embody its craftsmanship. Suppose you replaced the roof, original siding, windows, and doors of a simple old house all at once. What then would remain to distinguish it on the outside from a new building designed to look old? As with the human anatomy, original house parts tend to work better and be more time-tested than replacements. What would you rather have—replacements for teeth, hip joints, and a heart, or your own original parts?

**GB:** Everyone realizes that energy and its conservation will be a concern for many years to come, but many old-house owners also worry about its impact on their buildings. Any thoughts?

**CF:** In the 1970s, many property owners, government agencies, and professionals in the building industry responded to rising energy costs by sealing up old houses, often by covering vents in foundations, replacing doors and windows, installing insulation incorrectly, and adding whatever the salesman could market. Instead of repeating the damage this early work often caused to historic buildings, we need to build upon the preservation techniques worked out by the late 1980s for a more responsible approach.

Some people work themselves to the bone trying to improve the energy efficiency of historic buildings. The key is to look at the energy issues as they relate to the overall building—not just one feature at a time. Put your money where it returns the most payback with the least damage to the historic structure: reduce air infiltration, properly install or augment attic insulation, and purchase energy-efficient HVAC units and appliances. None of these measures typically leads to loss of significant historic features or materials. Don't ignore the value of passive features like thermal window coverings or drapes, another lesson from the '80s that seems to have been forgotten today. Also embrace landscaping as an energy tool.

**GB:** Some people are surprised that old-house lovers are among the most avid users of computers for their projects. Do you see any bumps ahead in the "information highway"?

**CF:** The Internet certainly has expanded the volume of information on how to repair and restore historic houses. Besides government agencies, there are helpful web sites by historic preservation organizations and some smaller preservation contractors and architectural firms. Unfortunately, there is also a lot of information online from companies hyping nothing but their products, and even material from misinformed preservationists and do-it-yourselfers. So the web has also made it more important than ever to know and trust your sources.

I encourage folks starting work on their first historic house to go to the Technical Preservation Services web site at [www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps](http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps). Also check out the web sites of State Historic Preservation Offices—not just for your state, but for others as well. I am still amazed at how many good, small architectural firms specializing in historic houses (and contractors with preservation experience) have little or no web presence. Find firms like these through local workshops, articles, and ads in local media, or word-of-mouth referrals. Remember, the web is only one of many sources.

For information on Preservation Briefs and Preservation Tech Notes, obtain a free copy of the TPS publication catalog by e-mailing [nps\\_hps-info@nps.gov](mailto:nps_hps-info@nps.gov).

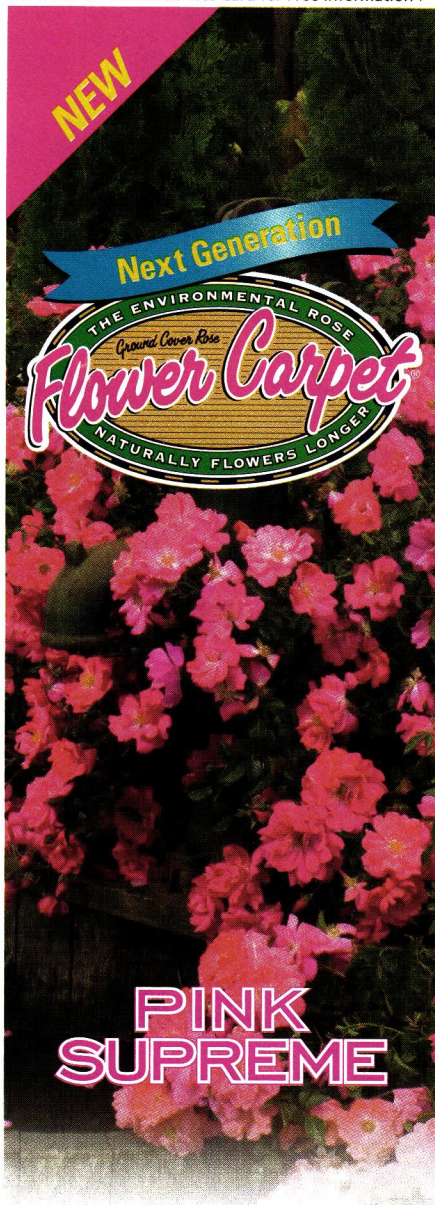


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## Ask OHJ

### Can Ivy Poison Your Brick?

I own a brick farmhouse built in the 1890s. When I bought the place several years ago, the brick was covered with ivy. I didn't think anything of it, but now I'm worried that the ivy might impact the integrity of the brick. Should I be concerned?

Margo Abbott  
Traverse City, Michigan

**Y**ou probably don't have much to worry about—provided the vines and their hair-like tendrils don't penetrate the wall through cracks in the open mortar joints, which is pretty rare.

However, if your brick has already begun to deteriorate (granted, this is difficult to see when it's covered by ivy), the growth of the ivy will accelerate the brick's decline. Moisture issues are another part of this equation. Think about it: If ivy smothers the brick—a lovely effect for some folks—it shades the walls and keeps water from drying rapidly, which may be a contributing factor in overall moisture problems. Dampness is usually more of a problem for homes built before the 1830s, when soft, handmade bricks were used.

If your home hasn't had moisture issues after all these years, it's probably



KATY MCAVOY PHOTO

fine. Still, for peace of mind, you might want to have your brick inspected. Also, you should regularly trim the ivy to keep it away from gutters, chimneys, windows, and doors.

### Wood Wonders

I'm considering a front-porch DIY project: replacing rotten balusters with new ones. Trouble is, I don't know which type of wood to use for the project. Do you have any recommendations that are naturally resistant to rot and wood-boring insects?

Jason Lee  
Baltimore, Maryland

**T**here are many types of wood that boast natural substances located in their cell structure that repel pests and stave off rot.

Pest-resistant species include Eastern

red cedar, bald cypress and redwood, and woods that resists decay includes cedar, black locust, and black walnut.

Cedar, the rot-and-termite-resistance standard bearer, has an outstanding track record. Of course, a lot depends on aesthetics. How does the wood take stain or paint, and what patina works best with the rest of your porch? Also, ask your neighbors and friends—are their porches holding up well and, if so, do they know the wood species used? Nothing beats field-research testing like this, and you might even convince them to lend you a hand on the project.





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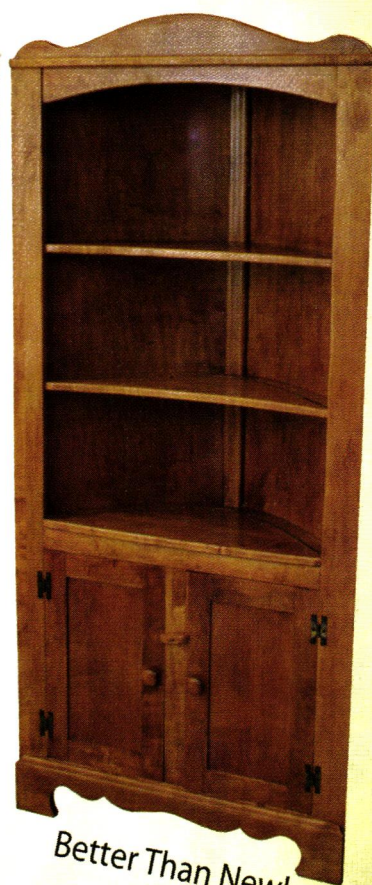
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Decorative shingle patterns showed their true colors on Queen Anne-style houses, where rows of different designs often exhibited different colors, like the square and round cuts here on the Hale House at the Heritage Square Museum in Los Angeles.

COURTESY OF HERITAGE SQUARE MUSEUM

# A Show of Shingles

BY DEMETRA APOSOROS



*Victorian-era houses displayed shingles like peacocks strut feathers. Some background can help your old house do the same.*

One of the hallmarks of the Victorian era was a desire to be noticed. It's a theme that repeated itself on every aspect of home furnishings of the day. Furniture was dripping in ornament, hardware was intricately incised, and buildings were adorned with every manner of attention-grabbing detail—from gingerbread trim to stained glass windows to seductively turned porch rails. Even exterior walls vied for attention through rows of patterned shingles, a technique with the funny- and formal-sounding name “imbrication”.

Victorian architects managed to use common cedar shingles to wildly decorative effect. These architects took simple pieces of wood—albeit ones handsomely cut across their butt ends—and placed them in rows to form distinctive patterns that managed to draw the eyes of observers as effectively as a wolf-whistle turns heads on a crowded street.

The patterns could be simple, like a single band of fancy shingles running

**TOP:** Courses of popular shingle cuts—square, round, and half cove—alternate in rows to dress up the walls of this Queen Anne house and make the turret and windows jump out at passersby.

**BOTTOM:** Sometimes, shingles' decorative effects could be more understated. On the mansard roof of the Second Empire Knudsen House, built between 1877 and 1885, no fewer than four cuts of fancy shingles subtly highlight various architectural details.



ANDY OLENICK PHOTO



COURTESY OF HERITAGE SQUARE MUSEUM





**LEFT:** Paint makes all the difference on the shingles on this house, nicknamed “the sunflower house” for the way white paint on the diamond-cut shingles makes them resemble sunflower petals as the sun travels across the sky, lengthening shadows.

## PAINT PERSPECTIVES

Paint was important on historic shingles not only for protection, but also for pizzazz. Today it's possible to protect wood using penetrating stains, but for historic authenticity, paint is still the way to go. Taking the time to paint wood shingles properly the first time can save work and trouble down the road. When painting newly manufactured replacement shingles:

- 1 Start with an alkyd-based primer. Be sure to cover all sides of the shingle, including areas that won't be exposed. Often, this means dipping the shingles by hand before any installation. It's also possible to order fully primed shingles from many manufacturers.
- 2 Select a good acrylic latex outdoor paint; these “breathe” as they shed water.
- 3 Apply two topcoats. The optimum thickness for the primer and two topcoats is 4 to 5 mils (1 mil=1/1000 of an inch), or about the thickness of a page of newspaper.
- 4 A building's north side weathers more slowly because it sees less direct sunlight (which deteriorates paint over time). So on the north side, apply just one topcoat of paint.
- 5 Well-executed paint jobs will last between 7 and 10 years.
- 6 Remember, it's easier to repaint wood before the first coat fails. When the topcoats have weathered enough that the primer starts showing, it's time to reach for your paintbrush.

*Information from the U.S. Forest Products Laboratory*

three or four deep around the middle of a house, which is known as a belt course. Or they could be much more elaborate, with row upon row of shingles of different shapes and styles stacked one atop the other, top to bottom, much like a queen wearing dazzling crown jewels on her way to a royal ball. It's fitting, then, that these most elaborate patterns were reserved for Queen Anne-style houses.

Queen Anne homes, of course, are known for layered attention to detail. While all Victorian-era houses boasted fancy architectural accessories, on Queen Annes, they seemed to cover every inch of available surface. Walls were the final frontier—and oh, did they get covered.

Some shingles were fancier than others, although all of these decorative shingles are referred to today as ‘fancy cuts.’ Back in the day, the simplest shingle designs might be square- or diagonal-cut across the bottom. But even these plain-Jane cuts could make dramatic statements across a house, especially when paired together in alternating rows. Mixing two rows of square-cuts with one row of diagonals created a shadow-box effect, heightened as the sun moved across the sky throughout the day. Paint those shingles different colors, and suddenly walls came to life in the pointy petals of a black-eyed Susan or a sunflower.

And those were just the simple patterns. On complicated, architect-designed high-style houses, it was possible to find five or six rows of different shingle designs. Shingles ending in diamonds or arrows were set atop round- or fish-scale cuts. Half coves were arranged in a line above

ANDY OLENICK PHOTO



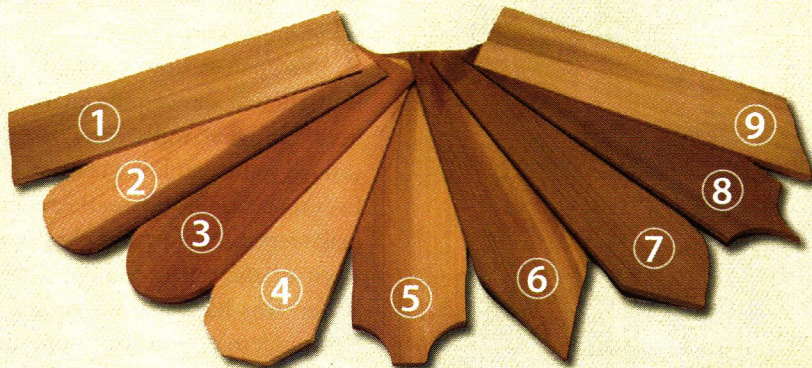


**LEFT:** Many a gable has been gussied up by the shingle treatment. This Victorian-era house in Rochester, New York, uses half coves to draw attention to ornamental reliefs within the gable itself.

**RIGHT:** Another gable of similar vintage and geographical locale alternates half coves with a less prominent shingle cut to draw the eye downward, directing stares toward the window show below.

## FANCY THIS

Cedar shingles in standard sizes (16" or 18" long x 5" wide) are universally available in the following fancy-cut patterns, all of which were also popular a century ago. Some companies offer a range of additional cuts by special order, too.



- 1 Square
- 2 Fish scale
- 3 Round
- 4 Octagonal
- 5 Half cove
- 6 Diamond
- 7 Hexagonal
- 8 Acorn
- 9 Diagonal





**TOP:** Starting at the top with sawtooth-cut shingles spaced closely together, each successive shingle course on this house gets a little more relaxed—both in intricacy of cuts and in spacing—for an overall effect that directs gazes across the high-style façade.

**BOTTOM:** Consistent treatment of shingles on the gables—and a different one on the mid-section of the bay wrapping around the corner—help dress up the exterior of this Queen Anne, despite a unified paint scheme.

square-cut shingles, their cutouts matched at the seams to form half-circles. A gable might be decked out in shingles with ends cut to resemble puzzle pieces, looking like something you'd find in a crumpled heap in the corner of a child's room. The possibilities were endless.

Paint was another important part of the shingle mix, adding another dimension to an already complicated display of architectural finery. Simple belt courses of decorative shingles would often be painted a single wildly contrasting hue. Houses with many decorative courses could show off separate paint colors on each one. The varieties were literally endless.

All of this frivolity arrived thanks to advances in the Industrial Age. Power tools and mechanization made construction much easier, allowing workers the time to add decorative touches to houses without adding much to the overall cost. As for the rationale behind running courses of wood shingles in staggered and overlapping installations in the first place—a practice that made decorative treatments easy to pull off—it was motivated by rather practical considerations: Staggered and overlapping shingles shed water pretty efficiently.

No matter how good the installation, though, or even the quality of wood used, shingled walls can't last forever, though some can last a century or more. Eventually, time and weather combine to make repair of select shingles, or replacement of the entire bunch, a necessity. When this happens, it's good to know that modern options (see opposite page) are available to help deck your Queen out in all her finery once more. 🏡



TOP: ANDY OLENICK PHOTO; BOTTOM: COURTESY OF CLEARY AND SON, INC.



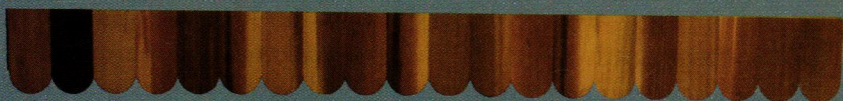


TOP: Decorator panels in two shapes—round and square—were used together to form the exterior cladding of this house.

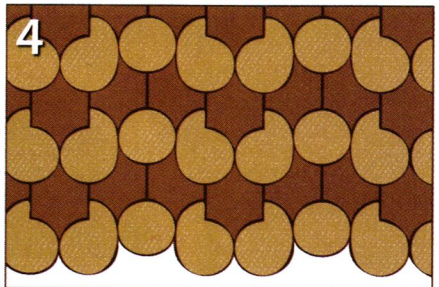
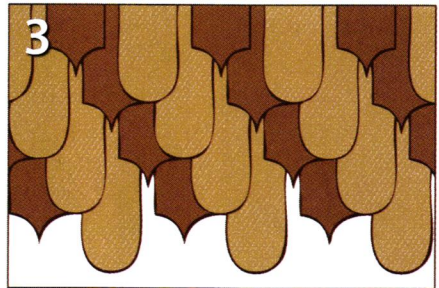
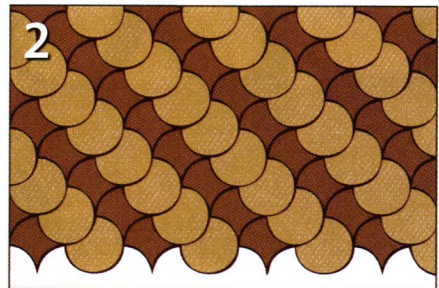
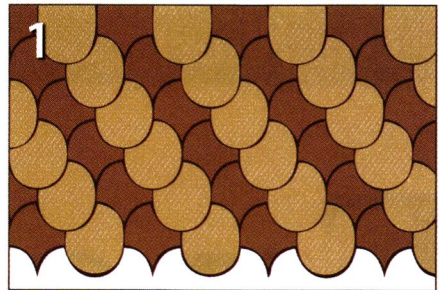
## MODERN DEVELOPMENTS

Wood shingles come in two varieties, green and kiln-dried. Green shingles are basically natural wood fresh from the tree. Historically speaking, all shingles were green. However, it's hard to get fancy cuts exactly the same on green shingles, due to their moisture content. Kiln-dried shingles have been slowly fired in an oven-like kiln. "We use a dehumidification kiln that's the reverse of a refrigerator, blowing hot air across the shingles to remove the moisture," says Jon Whorley of Cedar Valley Research and Product Development. Kiln-dried shingles are considered more stable because the drying process limits the amount of moisture shingles can absorb. That's why they're recommended for use on exterior wall applications today.

Several companies now offer kiln-dried, fancy-cut shingles that are pre-hung on 8'-wide panels. The benefits of these panels, often called decorator panels, can extend beyond their ease of installation. Because shingles are layered on a backing, they offer added insulation benefits (amounts vary by manufacturer). Manufacturers say panels use less wood per individual shingle because of the backing, thus saving some trees. Best of all, it's possible to use them and still mix up different styles of shingle cuts, to create traditional designs.



Round-cut shingles are one of many shapes available today on pre-hung panels that can be mixed and matched to create personalized designs.



## The Possibilities Are Endless...

Dozens of designs can be created with just two fancy-cut shapes.

- ① When acorn and round shingles are spaced equidistant in slightly staggered rows, they form diagonal lines.
- ② Hung closer together, a more prominent overall wave pattern develops.
- ③ Dropping the round shingles lower than the acorns on every course creates a stalactite effect.
- ④ Dropping every second and third round shingle adds details resembling exaggerated commas.



# Epoxies

### PALLADIAN MAGIC

Epoxy glue helped restore this Palladian window. Deteriorated wood was removed, and new pieces were spliced in to support the upper window panes.



*Epoxies can work wonders on restoration projects, if you know how to use them.*

When it comes to adhesives, most homeowners shy away from epoxies in favor of more familiar glues because they find them intimidating. Sure, it takes a little work to mix epoxies properly, but they have plenty of advantages that make the extra effort worth it. Epoxies are waterproof and extremely strong, and they resist most solvents. But most important in terms of restoration work, epoxy glues don't need clamp pressure to set. Understanding how epoxy glues work, and when to use them,

can save you time on restoration projects by allowing in-place repairs of layered architectural elements. With a little practice, epoxies could become common materials in your toolbox.

### One Hot Compound

Epoxies are basically two-part polymers or plastics. Many of us have had some experience with the epoxy glues available in the popular double-barreled syringe at hardware stores. While these are convenient, they are more costly and less versatile

than epoxies you mix yourself. Most epoxy adhesives can be formulated to work well with traditional materials such as stone and metal. (Other epoxies can also be used as fillers and as consolidants, to build up deteriorated wood surfaces.)

Generally speaking, epoxies consist of a resin and a hardener. The exact chemical composition of each isn't critical to understanding and using this material, but there are a few aspects worth noting. Cured epoxies are generally classified as polyamines. Chemically, they're different from polyesters, which make up the bulk of automobile body patches and fillers. While these have been promoted for restoration work, they do not perform as well as polyamines in exterior applications on wood.

All epoxies that we buy are derived from families of these two components, resins and hardeners. Manufacturers can control various properties such as curing rate, hardness, strength, and flexibility depending on the combination used. Because the hardener becomes part of the product, it is important that both components be mixed as closely as possible to the manufacturer's recommended proportions. To understand why, it helps to visualize how the two components work together. Imagine the resin as a jar of marble-sized ball bearings, and the hardener as small magnetic discs the size of watch batteries. When you mix both together and stir, they become a tangled mass of intertwined ball bearings. If you add too many ball bearings or too many





magnets, there will be weak spots.

Mix only as much epoxy as you need, both to avoid over-applying and because any extra will end up in the trash can. This is easier said than done; it takes practice to figure out the exact amount needed per project. If you have to err, do it on the side of mixing a little too much so you aren't stuck trying to combine more at a critical repair moment.

Epoxies are exothermic, meaning they generate heat as they cure. This heat accelerates the curing rate until all of the material has cross-linked. Curing times for epoxies are usually given at 70° F. Since curing is so temperature-dependent, a good rule of thumb is to assume that for every 18° F (10° C) change in temperature, the curing speed will either double or halve. So, if the outside air temperature is between 50° and 55° F, an epoxy designed to cure in 6 hours will need 12. The same epoxy will cure in about 3 hours on an 85° or 90° day. To slow (or accelerate) curing time, select epoxies formulated for warm or cool weather. In the summertime, work in shaded areas and transfer mixed material into wide, shallow containers so heat dissipates more rapidly.

## To Use, or Not to Use

Epoxies bond so strongly that they are difficult to reverse, so they should always be considered permanent. This makes epoxies great for repairs like inserting Dutchman patches into flooring, or securing gingerbread trim or other fragile architectural components that need bonding. But it also means you should consider the entire assembly before reaching for the mixing bowl. Historic windows, for

## A GOOD MIX

The new wood added to this Palladian window, attached with epoxy, is clearly visible (above). It's important to mix resin and hardener carefully (right), following the manufacturer's recommendations. Using a scale helps.

example, typically need maintenance that requires disassembly of one or more joints, so you should only use epoxy on non-jointed window elements.

After combining the resin and hardener in a disposable container, like a paper cup, I find it works best to mix thoroughly for a full 3 minutes before applying. Use a disposable brush, and always apply the epoxy to a completely dry surface. You can assure the proper alignment of parts with something as simple as masking tape, but if the pieces want to slide apart, you can use light clamp pressure to stabilize them until the epoxy has cured. Since epoxy is somewhat gap-filling, small inconsistencies in the joint surfaces are easily bridged. When the epoxy has cured, sand or plane away any excess. If the repair is on an exterior element, it must be protected from sunlight, which will break down epoxy polymers, so brush with an oil-based primer before finish coating. To keep epoxy from oozing onto surfaces outside of the glue joint (like the clamp itself), use strips of plastic wrap or waxed paper as a separator. (Epoxy won't stick to either one.) To protect the epoxy from rain while it cures, loosely cover the repair with plastic sheeting. 🏠

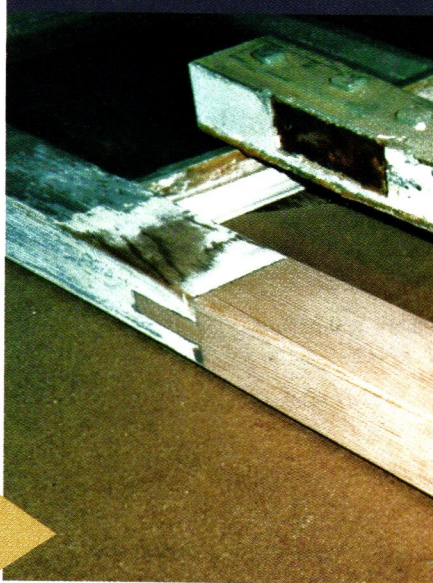
## BONDED FOR LIFE

Epoxies are so strong, they should be considered permanent. On windows, for example, use only on non-jointed elements.



## Working Safe

While epoxies are generally harmless, there are a few caveats associated with their use. In liquid form, their fumes can be harmful, so be sure to mix epoxies in well-ventilated areas only, or wear a mask fitted with fume filters. It's possible to develop skin allergies after repeated contact with epoxies, so you should always wear gloves when mixing them (disposables are fine). Epoxies are basically inert after curing, but it's still a good idea to put on a dust mask when sanding.





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# THE Stucco Brigade

*A daunting stucco-wall repair job on a 19th-century home in Rochester proves that a little patience—and lots of skill—goes a long way.*

By STEVE JORDAN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDY OLENIK

**W**ell, at least the weather was decent. That's about all plasterer Mike Dube and stucco pro Mike Needham had going for them as they considered the task ahead: repairing the badly cracked stucco exterior on the historic Ely house in Rochester, New York. The work would be arduous, given that other repairs over the decades had rendered the walls so cracked that their surface looked like the veins of an orange.

But restoring these gorgeous walls was worth it. The 1837 home, built for mill operator Hervey Ely before Rochester was even founded, is a wonderful example of a temple-front Greek Revival. It also boasts symmetrical setback wings on each side. Today it's well cared for and preserved by the Irondequoit

The Ely house's walls were originally built with load-bearing masonry and smoothed with white stucco. Repair work entailed using lime stucco (close to the original material) instead of Portland cement.





Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Like several other fine homes in the area, the Ely house was built with solid, load-bearing masonry walls, which were smoothed with sparkling white stucco. The builders who constructed the home wanted the walls to resemble ashlar masonry—a common alternative to brick, with an external face that's smooth, polished, or even decorated with small comb grooves. The home's false joints were highlighted with black penciling, which is still visible under the columned portico. Over the years, the original stucco was patched, repaired, and painted to hide shoddy repair work.

## Cracks—and More Cracks

The most recent round of repairs stretches back 15 years, when cracks on a wing built in the 1870s were repaired. A team removed the original stucco—even the sound material—from the stone substrate. Local masons applied a bonding agent to the stone. They then applied expanded metal lath, a scratch coat, a brown coat, and a topcoat of white Portland cement and marble dust. All this work resulted in...failure. Hairline cracks snaked in every direction across the surface.

The stucco and metal lath were removed, and the walls were then finished with a softer mix of lime, marble dust, and Portland cement deemed more compatible with the substrate. These walls have

generally held up well, although the bond of old-to-new stucco still shows hairline cracks. The relatively good condition of the walls may also have been due to the protection of an ample roof overhang and lower porch.

## A New-Old Approach

Realizing the flaws in the past repair work, the homeowners and their consultants hoped these missteps could offer some clues about the stucco's longevity. So they sought a mason familiar with historic stucco techniques. Enter Mike Needham, who teaches plastering and stucco methods to local union masons and is familiar with old lime mixes. Needham thought the Portland cement was the reason previous repairs had failed. He suggested applying a lime stucco mix—without Portland cement and bonding agents—similar to the original material that held for more than a century. Plasterer Mike Dube and his son, Lucien, also joined the project. Dube wasn't familiar with lime

**LEFT: Mike Dube holds the sparkling white dry-finish mix in his hand. The mix gives the walls their vibrancy.**

**RIGHT: Wet stucco reveals the consistency of the wall's finish-coat material.**

stucco techniques, but he was willing to dive in and learn a little something.

The original plan was to clean and score the surface, make a few repairs, and then apply a new finish coat over the old. Dube and his son devised an ingenious solution for scoring the old material. Their tools: a vacuum-assisted sander and a carbide-tooth sanding disc. While one man sanded the wall, the other sounded out areas to search for loose material that needed to be removed.

But this good work led to a revelation: Making just a few repairs to the wall and applying a new finish coat wasn't going to work. Too much material was falling off, and once they started removing material, it was hard to stop.

## Repair TIP

### Keep Your Eye on the Finish

The great thing (all right, some might say the painful thing) about working on a complicated stucco repair job is that we learn something almost every step of the way. For example, past repairs on the Ely house included attempts to thinly skim-coat material over deteriorated areas and efforts to join old stucco to new without adequately removing enough of the old stuff. The bottom line: Whether applied over old or new stucco, the finish coat must be at least 1/8" thick to bond to the underlying material. Also, when joining new stucco to old, the new plaster shouldn't be feathered in. The existing material must be cut back to provide a right angle or back angle for an adequate bond.





## History of Cement Mortars

Ancient Egyptians introduced lime and sand mortars, Romans perfected them, and they've been used in various construction and finishing methods ever since. Although mostly replaced by Portland cement mortars near the turn of the 20th century, lime mortars surpass the hard Portland mortars in many ways. Lime mortars are soft and forgiving; this allows a stucco or masonry wall to settle slowly without cracking. Since lime mortars are softer than surrounding or underlying masonry units, moisture in the walls can escape through the mortar or stucco rather than through stone, brick, or block. This prevents spalling (breaking off or flaking of materials) and other problems associated with the use of hard mortars.

More differences between the two types of mortar: Lime mortars can be scratched easily with a knife or key; Portland cannot. When dropped in diluted muriatic acid, lime mortars will bubble and fizz; pure Portland mortars will not.

If your house was built just before or after the turn of the 20th century, the mortar or stucco is probably formulated with Portland cement or a Portland/lime mix. Determining the mortar mix will ensure compatible repair work. Mortars and stuccoes should always match the consistency of the old material or be slightly softer—never harder.



## Smart Mix

Once the wall had been completely scored, the crew got to work applying the scratch coat, a 3-to-1 mix of medium sand and slaked (hydrated) lime. Since this meant mixing dry sand with wet lime putty, the lime was proportioned prior to adding the water to ensure the 3-to-1 mix. Before applying the scratch coat, the wall was slightly dampened to prevent the dry substrate from sucking the moisture out of the new material before it could cure properly. This coat was allowed to dry for three days, and because the weather was ideal, the surface didn't have to be misted to maintain dampness. And the really good news: Hairline cracks didn't appear in the surface, nor were there any failures at the edges of the old and new material. The brown coat mix was identical to the scratch coat, but was much easier to apply—and again, there was no cracking in the finish.

The finish coat was a 3-to-1 mix of fine sand (equal proportions of #2 and #3) and hydrated lime that was slaked a few days before it was used. Although the home's original stucco boasted a beautiful tannish/yellow appearance, scoring the surface had revealed that the original color was bright white, leading to a choice of brilliant white sand for the final coat. This mixture didn't trowel out as smoothly as the original mix, given that similar mate-



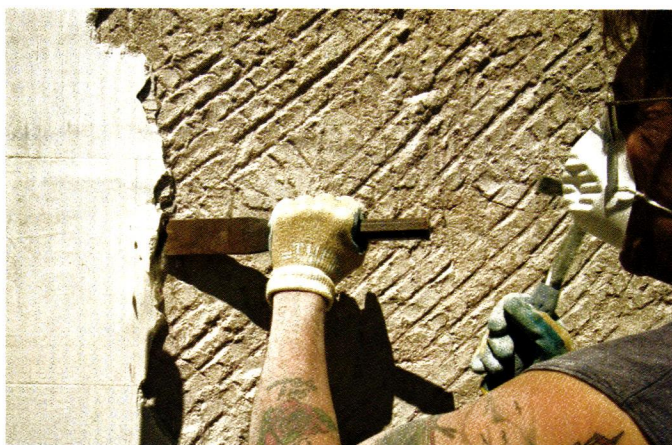
**TOP:** The 1837 Hervey Ely house is a fine example of a temple-front Greek Revival. Symmetrical setback wings stand on each side of the house.

**BOTTOM:** Mike Dube applies the faux horizontal mortar joint lines in the finish coat.

rials weren't available in the area. But lack of materials has never stopped a determined crew—Needham and Dube drove three hours to purchase the perfect sand.

When the finish coat was applied, it set up more quickly than anticipated. Keeping a wet edge across the wall was difficult and forced everyone to work at a brisk pace. When they stopped, the material was terminated squarely in line with what would be the simulated mor-





**ABOVE:** Mike Dube chips away the old stucco, which had been patched and painted over the years. Hairline cracks snaked in every direction.

tar joints. These lines corresponded to the lines on the adjacent walls where they would join the old to the new. (Since the crew was repairing one wing at a time, the original faux mortar-joint lines were still visible. So Needham and Dube simply joined the horizontal joints on the adjacent walls and carried the markings around the wing with a line level. And the vertical joints? They approximated the spacing of those on the remainder of the house.)

The original joints were applied after the stucco had significantly hardened—but not completely. A hard tool was dragged across the surface, using a straight edge and level as a guide when creating the indented joint. The surface was not scored, and no material was removed.

Unfamiliar with this technique and concerned that the wall was setting up too quickly to apply the joint, Needham and Dube decided to create the joint with the edges of their trowels, first scoring a line and then smoothing out the loose material with a trowel. They moved the tool up and down from the horizontal lines and side to side on the verticals. This significantly slowed their progress, but the results were impressive. For the next two days, the walls were periodically misted to prevent premature drying. Both Needham and Dube were happy with their work, and the homeowners were ecstatic. Still, the repair duo looks forward to refining their techniques on the home's next large wall. Because the finish appearance is slightly coarser than the original, Dube says the team will consider using all #2 sand for the next job and add marble dust to the mix to make the finish look more compact.

If you walk by the Ely house today—more than six months after the project—look at the repaired walls. You won't find a single crack. 🏠

*The DAR membership would like to thank the Corn Hill Neighborhood Association for the generous grant that made this work possible.*

**RIGHT:** Beginning at the wall's corner, Mike applies the finish coat with a steady hand, careful to keep it at least 1/8" thick. In the end, there were no failures at the edges of the old and new materials.



**Before applying the scratch coat, the wall was slightly dampened to keep the substrate from sucking moisture and preventing a good cure. The brown coat (above) went up easily.**





Tile roofs are common on Spanish-style houses, like this multi-hued example in Dallas, Texas, designed in the late 1920s by noted local architect Clifford Hutsell.



# Clay Today, & Tomorrow Too

**Tile roofs are defining features on many old houses. A little background can help keep yours looking good as new.** BY JANE POWELL

**T**ile is one of the most decorative forms of roofing, offering endless ornamental possibilities, thanks to the variety of available shapes, colors, patterns, and textures. Tile is also among roofing's most durable materials—it doesn't burn or rot, deteriorate from salt spray in coastal areas, or heat in the desert, and rodents and bugs don't chew on it. Is it any wonder, then, that clay tile roofs can last anywhere from 50 to several hundred years?

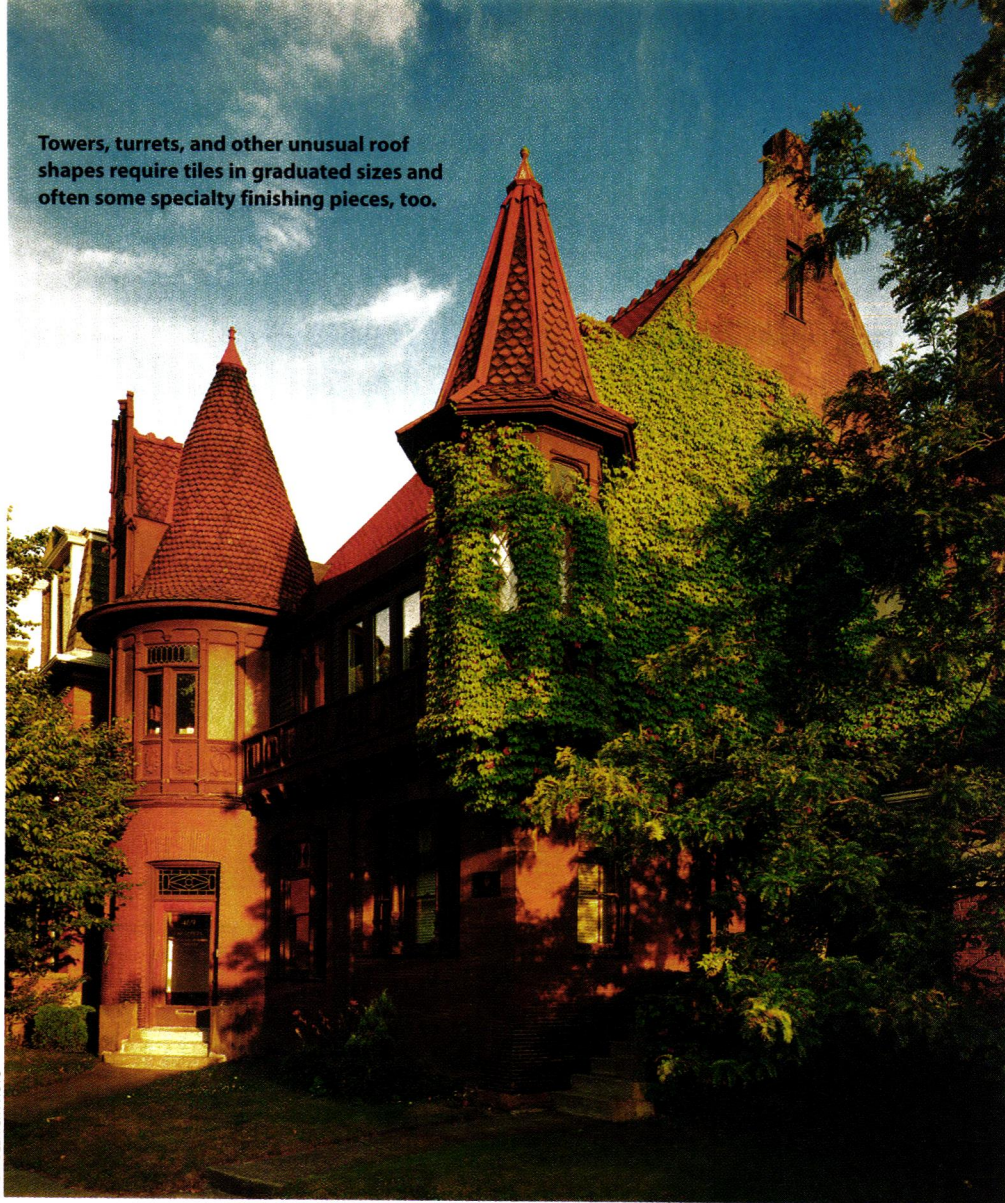
The two biggest enemies of tile roofs are falling tree branches and humans. Why humans? Because people are the culprits behind bad tile installations and faulty maintenance; they also often don't know how to properly walk across tile roofs without breaking them. The main downside of tile

ABOVE: COURTESY OF ARCHITECTURALLYSIGNIFICANTHOMES.COM





ANDY OLENICK PHOTO



Towers, turrets, and other unusual roof shapes require tiles in graduated sizes and often some specialty finishing pieces, too.

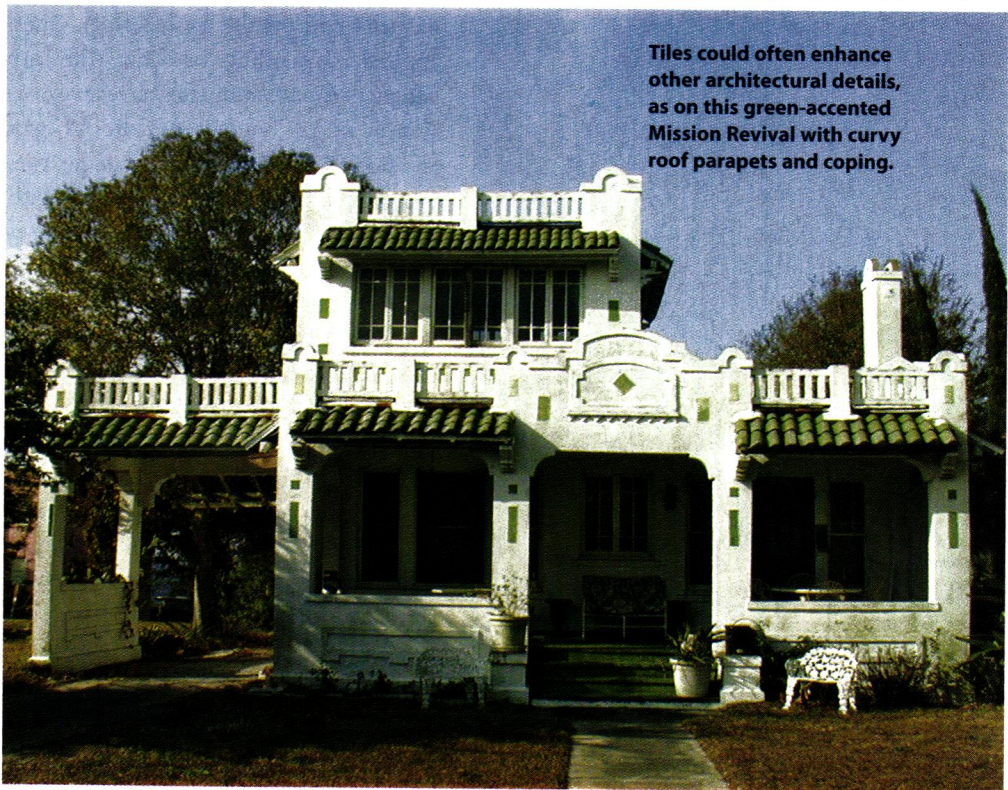
roofing, in fact, is its steep upfront costs. But, when spread out over a roof's long lifespan, tile is actually economical.

## Tile Through Time

Clay tiles have deep historical roots. In China, tiles dating back to 10,000 B.C. have been found, and they appeared in the Middle East a short time later. Tile roofing traditions arrived to the U.S. through European settlers—via the Dutch on the East Coast around 1650 and through Spanish missionaries on the West Coast in the 1700s. Clay tiles were molded by hand until about 1870, when they began being manufactured by machine extrusion.

Historically, clay-roofing tiles were categorized by their general shapes. The two basic tile types are rounded pan tiles and flat tiles. Pan tiles include the familiar barrel (or Mission) tiles, and Spanish

COURTESY OF CAROLE CARNOVALE

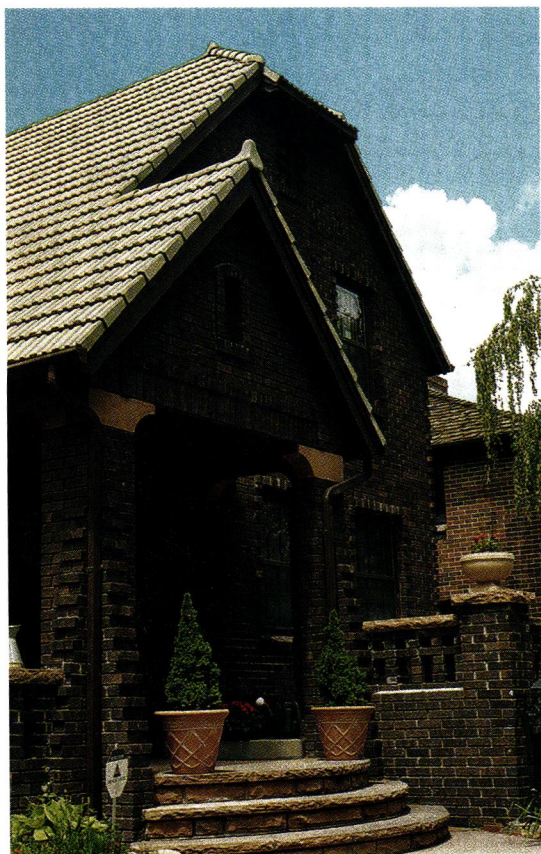


Tiles could often enhance other architectural details, as on this green-accented Mission Revival with curvy roof parapets and coping.





Given a history that predates ancient Greece, clay tile roofs may seem an awkward fit with modern architecture, but Frank Lloyd Wright would disagree. Time and again, Wright used clay roofs to great success on many of his groundbreaking—and now iconic—house designs, including the Robie house, Wingspread, and the Coonley Estate (above) in Riverside, Illinois.



Roofs in a range of earth tones appeared on bungalows, like this chocolate brown example topping a house in Denver, Colorado.

tiles; they also encompass designs where two flat tile pieces are overlapped by a single curved tile, like Roman and Greek varieties. Flat tiles are referred to as slab, shingle, book, or French. Both pan and flat tiles can overlap or interlock when applied, depending on how they are designed. Interlocking tiles have an extrusion or lip on one tile that hooks over an edge or channel on an adjacent tile. Overlapping tiles, if flat, are applied with staggered joints in overlapping courses like shingles or slates. With pan tiles, the convex “cap” tiles overlap the concave “pan” or “trough” tiles on both sides. S-tiles, often called Spanish, combine the pan and cap into a single tile. Specialty tiles are required for ridge caps, starter tiles (sometimes called bird stops), and odd spaces at roof hips, rakes, or dormers. These can be highly decorative. Some roof shapes, particularly conical towers or turrets, require tiles in graduated sizes.

### A Natural Palette

Unglazed clay tiles range in color from terra cotta to buff, brown, even pale pink.

Tiles were sometimes treated with a manganese solution before firing to produce a black, brown, or bluish scorch mark on the surface. They also can be colored using slip (thin, runny clay). But the most expensive way to color roof tile is with glazes. As with indoor tiles, almost any color is possible, though historically, color preferences leaned toward greens, blues, and occasionally purples.

### Concrete Evidence

Concrete roof tiles are a much later invention. They became available in the U.S. around the turn of the 20th century, but concrete roofing didn’t become widely used until decades later. Concrete tiles were molded by hand until the 1920s, but now they are extruded. The one exception is the Hendricks Tile Company of Richmond, Virginia, which still makes concrete tiles by hand.

Initially, concrete tiles were colored with iron oxides to imitate the red of terra cotta tile, the brown of wood shakes, or the grays and greens of slate, and earth tones remain the most popular colors.



Concrete tiles were often used in the early to mid-20th century as more durable alternatives to wood, and more cost-effective alternatives to slate roofs.

## Variety Show

Tile roofs, though found on just about every style of building, are commonly associated with architectural approaches rooted in Spain, like Mission, Adobe, and Pueblo Revival. But tile roofing options extend far beyond Spanish influence. Tiles resembling slate are often seen on Period Revival homes like Tudors or Normandy cottages. Some bungalows and Craftsman-style houses employed tile roofs, particularly the iconic Chicago bungalows. A few famous homes feature gorgeous tiled roofs, such as Gustav Stickley's home at Craftsman Farms and numerous Frank Lloyd Wright-designed houses. Handmade concrete shingles have been used in restoration projects at Colonial Williamsburg, Old Salem Village in North Carolina, and in many National Park Service projects.

## Weight for It

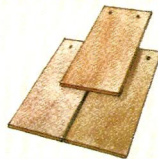
Tile is heavy, but not as heavy as you might think. A roof strong enough to hold three layers of asphalt shingles could probably also stand up to the weight of tile. Clay tile generally weighs more than concrete, anywhere from 1,000 to 1,500 pounds per square (a square equals a 10'-by-10' area). Regular concrete tile weighs from 900 to 1,200 pounds per square, while newer lightweight concrete tile comes in at under 600 pounds per square, below the level at which many jurisdictions require a consultation by a structural engineer. When in doubt, it's a good idea to consult an engineer anyway.

## Thereby Hangs a Tile

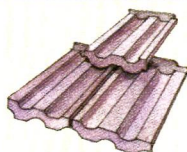
Up until the mid-19th century, tiles were hung on horizontal battens using oak pegs, with no sheathing or building paper. This made it easy to find leaks and make repairs, but meant depending entirely on the tiles to keep water out. Eventually, tiles were nailed directly to wood sheathing, or hung on battens nailed to the sheathing using lugs or nibs molded into the back. Barrel tiles were often nailed to vertical battens, with cap tiles attached with wire. Ridge and trim tiles were often mortar-set.

Modern roofing practices lay tiles on 1"-thick sheathing with (at least) 30 pound felt or built-up roofing underneath, and a minimum slope of 3 in 12 (rising 3 inches for every foot). In areas prone to hurricanes or tornadoes, tiles must not only be nailed, but also attached to steel clips to prevent uplift in high winds. Hips and ridges are mechanically fastened and also adhered with polyurethane foam adhesives, which were found to bond better than mortar. Concerns about the performance of tile roofs during earthquakes have been allayed somewhat by a recent University of Southern California study, which found that tile roofs installed to uniform building code requirements withstood up to twice the forces required by code.

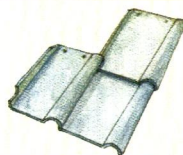
## Common Tile Shapes



Shingle or slab tiles, like all flat tiles, install in overlapping courses with staggered joints.



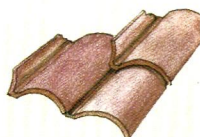
French tiles are flat, with decorative channels that add a little flair and also help move water.



Single roman tiles are flat, with one curved side that overlaps adjoining tiles.



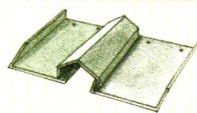
Pan tiles consist of a convex "cap" tile that overlaps a concave "pan" (or "trough") tile.



S-tiles combine the pan and cap into a single tile.



Roman tiles cover two flat tiles (with upturned edges) with a rounded cap.



Greek tiles resemble Romans, but with a more distinctive, angular cap.

ROB LEANNA ILLUSTRATIONS



When tiles outlast their support systems, it's often necessary to remove them in order to install new flashings and underlayments. These Ludowici tiles were cataloged as they were taken down so they could be reinstalled exactly as they had appeared on the original roof.

JAMES C. MASSEY PHOTO



Even Colonial Revival houses could be protected by traditional Spanish-style barrel roofs, as this stately building in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, demonstrates.



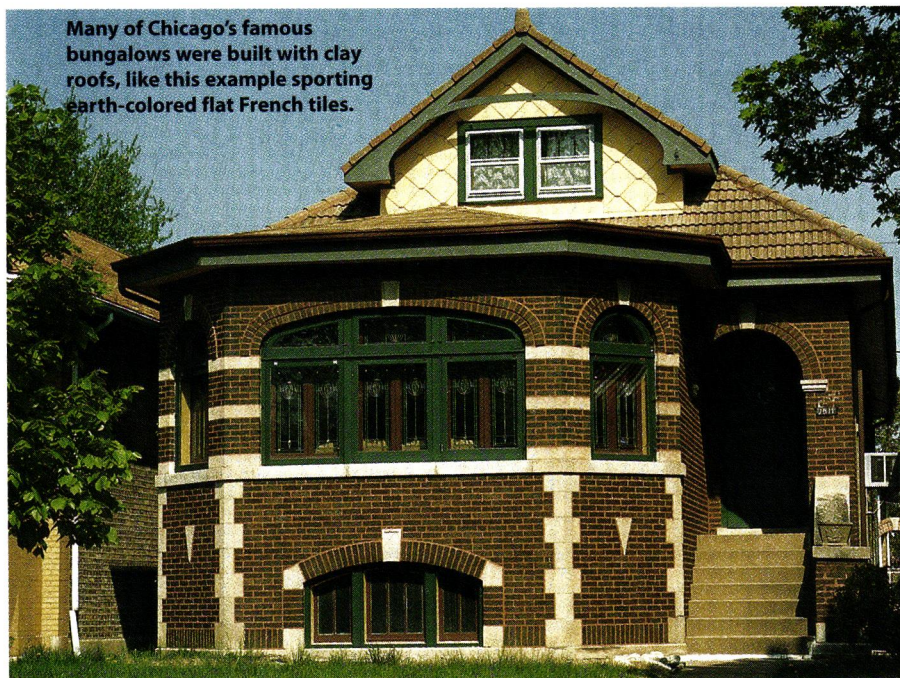
COURTESY OF CAROLE CARNOVALE

## Flashing in the Pan

Fastening systems often give way before the roof—iron nails can rust out, so copper nails and wire or stainless steel screws are the recommended fasteners. Flashings and gutters must be the best quality metal—at least 16-ounce copper or lead-coated copper—in order to be as long-lasting as possible. Still, on a roof that's been up a hundred years or more, it's likely that the flashings and underlayment have deteriorated, requiring that all tiles be removed to replace them.

Installation and repair of tile roofs is a job best left to professional roofers experienced in working with tile. A new installation is straightforward, but repairs, re-roofing, or adding additions on existing tile roofs may involve finding salvaged tiles to match the originals. Given the variety of shapes and colors that have been available for the past 300 years, it's amazing that anyone manages to find a match, but they do. It helps that three companies—Gladding-McBean, Boston Valley Terra Cotta, and Ludowici—are still producing clay tile in many traditional shapes and colors, and can also re-create their vintage patterns. Finding

Many of Chicago's famous bungalows were built with clay roofs, like this example sporting earth-colored flat French tiles.



LINDA SVENDSEN PHOTO

matches may also involve dealing with salvage tile vendors, and some colors and profiles will be easier to find than others. Red Mission or Spanish tiles are more common than glazed French tiles, for example.

Whatever you do, don't let a roofer talk you into replacing a tile roof with asphalt shingles. It may be cheaper in

the short run, but it will never look right or last as long. Tile roofs are distinctive, often dominant, features of historic buildings. Take them away, and your house will never be the same. Having a tile roof is a lot like owning a parrot—both are beautiful, exotic, expensive, and sometimes difficult to deal with. And both will probably outlive you. 🦜



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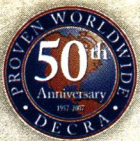
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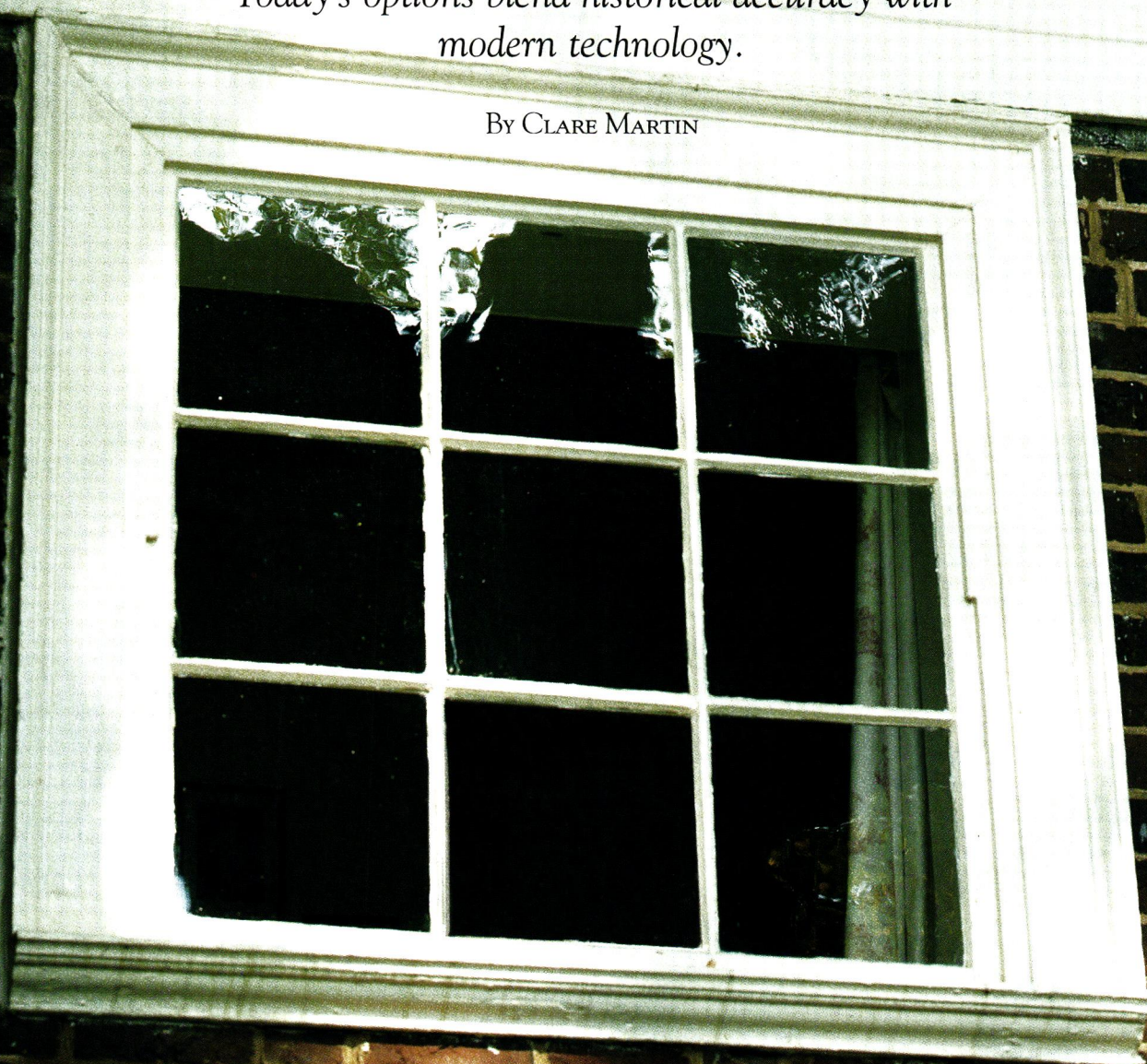
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# The Glass. Menagerie

*Need to replace the glass in your windows?  
Today's options blend historical accuracy with  
modern technology.*

By CLARE MARTIN



NUL ROCHIEAU PHOTO



If you're like most old-house owners, your home's original windows are a point of pride. From their true divided lights to their counterweight-and-pulley mechanisms to their wavy, distorted glass, those windows are a huge part of the character of your house. But like most parts of your home, they need a little TLC to stay in top shape—in fact, they often need more of it, considering that they have to withstand harsh conditions like wind, sunlight, and stray fastballs from your neighbor's back yard. Given all this, it's almost inevitable that you'll come to a restore-or-replace crossroads with a window at some point in the life of your house.

Unlike other components of historic windows (wood sashes that are prone to rot and decay; sticking counterweights that make the window difficult to open), the glass usually doesn't need as much attention. "We've taken 300-year-old glass out of windows," says Marc Cleary, director of sales for Cleary and Son, a Massachusetts-based window restorer. "Unless something has caused it to break, an old window should last for a long time." Accidents do happen, of course—and there are a few other factors that might signal a need for glass replacement, including scratches, staining or a remuddling courtesy of a previous owner. Plus, with new technology for window glass (from impact resistance to energy-efficient coatings) popping up all the time, you might start to wonder if new glass is the way to go. The good news is that replacing the glass in your historic windows doesn't have to be an arduous task—and it's entirely possible to take advantage of new technology without sacrificing period authenticity.

## The Match Game

Although glass has been made in some form or another since the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans, sheet glass for windows wasn't produced until the 11th century, when Europeans discovered that glass could be blown in a cylinder and then swung or rotated to create a flat surface—albeit one with a tell-tale circle in the middle that belied its ori-



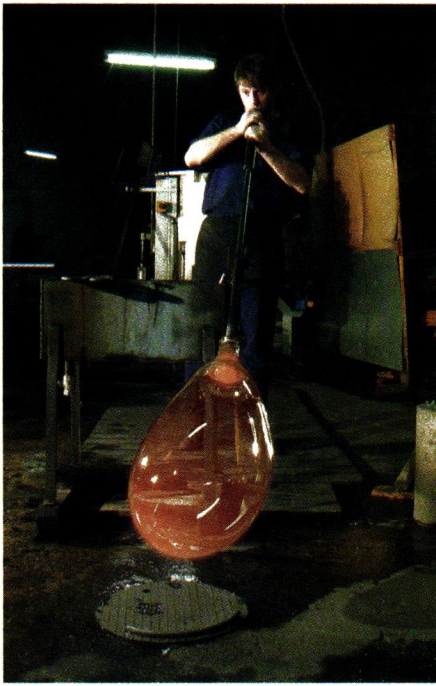
The owner of this Victorian was fortunate enough to have six of the home's original windows (complete with 100-year-old glass) intact—which means they can serve as a glass-matching guide for the remaining windows, which were fitted 20 years ago with modern glass that has since failed.

gins. This type of glass (often known as crown glass) was common in palaces and luxury homes up until the 17th century, when French glassmakers patented a new process for creating glass. This method involved pouring molten glass onto a flat surface, then grinding and polishing it to produce a flatter surface with much higher visibility. As the Industrial Revolution began its march across Europe and America, processes for producing flat glass became more and more refined (cul-

minating with modern float-glass production, introduced in the late 1950s), and the glass became clearer and less distorted as the years went on.

Given this tie between history and glass distortion, it's important to take the time period of your house into account when looking for reproduction glass, especially if you don't have the original to compare it to. "Back then, glass was made to look as perfect as possible," explains Robert Jayson, president of Bendheim,





BENDHEIM PHOTOS

one of the largest American suppliers of mouth-blown reproduction glass—in other words, don't assume that you need the most distortion possible to achieve the most authentic look. "Less is more most of the time," Robert says. "You don't want it to be overly distorted—it's difficult to look through and makes much more of a statement." With this in mind, Bendheim offers two different weights of its reproduction glass—"full" is heavier and more distorted, designed for 17th- and 18th-century homes, while "light" has less

movement and is recommended for 19th- and early 20th-century homes. Marc says Cleary & Son typically uses Bendheim's light glass for buildings that are between 100 to 200 years old, and relies on a less distorted glass from a different manufacturer for homes less than 100 years old.

If you're lucky enough to have the window's original glass as a guide, determining the appropriate amount of distortion will be that much easier—but getting a perfect match could be tricky. "There were so many makers of historic glass that

finding an exact match isn't always possible," says Robert. The best way to stack the deck in your favor, he suggests, is to either request samples from the manufacturer to try to find the best match on your own, or to send a piece of the original glass to a manufacturer and let him figure it out. "As long as the piece is large enough," Robert says, "we can determine which type of glass will work best."

## New Meets Old

Glass replacement isn't just a matter of finding what looks best, though. You'll also want to take into account factors such as safety, energy efficiency, and UV transmission when shopping around for reproduction glass—but you don't have to compromise today's standards in your quest for yesterday's aesthetics.

Take energy efficiency, for example: Older, single-pane glass is often cited as being wildly inefficient, even though a window's glass typically only accounts for a small percentage of the overall energy transmission of the window. Because of this



**CLOCKWISE:** German glassmaker Glashütte Lamberts uses a centuries-old process to create reproduction glass for Bendheim. Mouth-blown cylinders of molten glass (top left) are scored, flattened, and cooled to create solid sheets. Each piece is rigorously inspected (top right) before being installed in historic structures such as the Second Branch Bank (left).



## To DIY or Not to DIY?

When it comes to the question of whether you should tackle replacing the glass in your windows yourself, our experts agreed that it all depends on your level of DIY ability. Still, it shouldn't be too much of a challenge for handy homeowners. If you feel comfortable doing the project yourself, here are a few things to keep in mind:

**1 Make sure you can access the window safely.** "You don't want to be on the fifth floor, hanging out the window," says Marc Cleary of Massachusetts-based Cleary and Son. "That's something our guys do, but I wouldn't recommend it for homeowners." If it's a first-floor window that's easily accessible from a porch or by a small ladder, you'll be much better off.

**2 Take the intricacy of the window into account.** If you're only replacing a small pane of glass in a six-over-six divided-light wood window, the task will be much easier than if you're dealing with larger sizes and unusual shapes. If you're unsure about cutting the glass yourself, most reproduction glass can be cut to fit when ordered.

**3 Always follow the instructions.** In order to make your restored windows truly like new, you'll need to undertake all of the proper steps for restoration, which include removing the putty to free the old glass, putting the new glass in, letting the putty dry completely, then priming and painting the frame.







**1 BEFORE:** When Cleary and Sons restored the windows of the early 18th-century Thomas Pellet House, Marc Cleary estimates that between 200 and 300 pieces of glass had to be taken out of the windows, and either cleaned and restored, or replaced with reproduction glass.



**2 AFTER:** Reproduction glass helps the newly restored windows retain their historic look. In certain areas of the building, interior magnetic storm windows with laminated glass were used to abate nearby traffic noise, while exterior storms were used elsewhere to boost energy efficiency.

perception, insulated glass (two panes of glass with air or gas sandwiched between) has become the new standard for modern windows. However, says Marc, “We stay away from insulated glass because it typically only lasts 10 or 20 years before the seal breaks and it starts to fog up.” Because the effectiveness of insulated glass lies in its double-pane system, the addition of a storm window can have a similar insulating effect. (For more on the energy benefits of installing storm windows, see “Embracing Energy Efficiency,” OHJ S/O ‘07.)

For those who live in hurricane zones or other natural-disaster-prone areas, the same lamination that makes modern glass impact-resistant (involving a plastic interlayer that will stay intact when the glass is shattered) is also available on reproduction glass. Bendheim’s version uses a pane of reproduction glass on the exterior and a pane of standard float glass on the interior, which allows for a period-appropriate look

without obscuring visibility, says Robert. Although he admits that this option can be substantially more expensive, the benefits are numerous: In addition to providing safety from storms or break-ins, it also helps control sound transmission. Bendheim also has provided the option of a UV-inhibiting coating on its glass (used on the restoration of the skylights at Monticello), which blocks 99 percent of fading UV rays.

Even without special applications or features, though, choosing authentic reproduction glass over some of the newer options available today will still be a substantial investment—Marc estimates that the cost for reproduction glass can be double what you would pay for standard float glass. However, he points out, “When you have the chance to put in glass that will match the era of the house, you might spend more, but you’ll get exactly what you want.” 🏠

CLEARY AND SON, INC. PHOTOS



For homes with more intricate windows, such as the leaded diamond-light casements on this 1920s Tudor, professional help might be necessary for a successful glass repair.





STEPS AND PHOTOS BY  
JOHN LEEKE

# Saving the Soffit

Follow these 7 simple steps to seamless, long-lasting soffit and cornice repair.

From a distance, it was clear: My century-old barn needed a complete paint job. But after closer examination and a little poking around, I realized the situation was more critical than cosmetic—there were some serious woodwork repairs to be made. More specifically, the soffits and cornices were showing signs of decay. I always approach this kind of work with an organized, step-by-step method that has proven effective over the decades I've spent preserving such fine, old structures. No matter if you're fixing a barn or a historic home, here's how to mend your soffit ends and cornices to ensure your structure will stand the test of time.

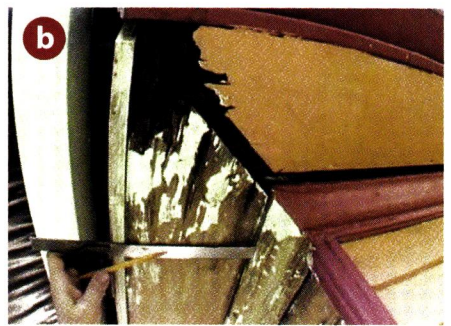


## 1 DETERMINE THE TYPE AND EXTENT OF THE DETERIORATION

The first and most obvious step is to look for rotten wood. Structural movement of the building may shift the cornice woodwork, opening up joints. This breaks the paint film, letting water soak into the end-grain causing checks, splits, and decay.

The decay is easiest to spot where the wood is completely missing, but be sure to look for other telltale signs. Paint peeling down to bare wood (a) indicates there has been a high concentration of moisture in the wood, perhaps enough to support the growth of fungus. Poke into the wood with a sharp awl or ice pick to discover soft, decayed wood at the surface. Also, tap the surface of the wood with the handle, and listen for the sharp ring of sound wood or the dry hollow thud that indicates a thin ( $\frac{1}{16}$ " to  $\frac{1}{8}$ ") layer of sound wood right at the surface, but rotten wood is underneath.

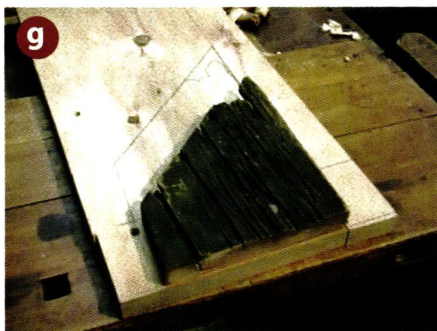
Once you find deterioration, determine how far it extends. Often decay and splits are worst at the ends of the boards, with conditions improving further in. Splits usually continue at least a few inches deeper than are first apparent. There also may be deterioration along edges and in the middle of a board, so careful assessment is needed throughout. When you find a decay pocket or a split, look at similar locations where you may discover more of the same.



## 2 PLAN THE REPAIRS

There are four basic types of repair techniques: wood Dutchman (a patch), lap-joint splice, wood-epoxy repair, and complete replacement.





On my barn project, I knew I'd have some extensive repairs. Every corner of the cornice had decay and splits in the end of at least one soffit board, but thankfully, the rest of the soffits, running about 160 lineal feet, were in good condition. Since less than 1 percent of the length of the soffit boards needed work, it was worthwhile to make spot repairs, instead of considering complete replacement. I used a mix of Dutchman, lap-splicing, and wood-epoxy methods for fixes. Here, I'll show you how I repaired the end of a soffit board with the traditional lap-joint splice repair method, which removes the deteriorated board end and splices on new wood.

First, with a pencil and a combination square, I mark the soffit boards where I

need to cut (b). Then I cut off the deteriorated end of the board (c, d) and examine the pieces closely to determine if there is more deterioration to remove, in which case, I mark a new joint a few inches along, cut it off, and repeat the process until I hit structurally sound wood.

### 3 DESIGN AND LAY OUT THE JOINT

Now that I know the conditions of the board in detail, I can design an effective joint. Here, I'll use a 3"-long half-lap joint. I lay out the joint with a pencil, combination square and marking gauge (as in Step 2). I mark the shoulder of the lap 3" back from the end of the board, using the square to make it 90 degrees to the edge of the board. Then, I set the marking

gauge for half the thickness of the board and mark the cheek of the joint (e) on the end of the board.

### 4 CUT AND SHAPE THE JOINT

Next, I cut the shoulder. The depth of this cut extends only halfway through the board. I like to use a Fein multi-tool fitted with a saw blade, which goes a bit slow, but gives me more control for these tricky cuts. Working with a mallet and sharp chisel, I split away the waste (f) and pare down the surface of the cheek until it is nice and flat.

### 5 CREATE THE REPLACEMENT PART

In the shop, I make the replacement part using the old board end as a pattern. The original soffits are made of heartwood Eastern white pine, so I select a board of the same. At the end of the boards, I match the annual growth ring pattern so the new board will expand and shrink with changes in moisture content, as the old one did. This will help the joint be more stable and last longer. I trace around the old board to set the shape of the new part (g), allowing an additional 3" in length for the lap joint and avoiding defects like knots. Then I shape the part (h), cutting to the layout marks and overlap depth with a handsaw, hand plane, chisel, and mallet.

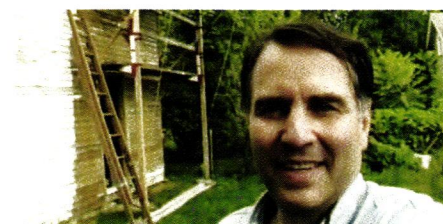
### 6 ASSEMBLE THE REPAIR

Back up on the scaffold, I check the part in place, trim it to fit, and drill shank holes in the new part for screws to hold the joint together. Then I glue it into place with an epoxy adhesive (i). (Any flexible weatherproof adhesive will work.) After spreading the adhesive, I set the part in place and drive in the screws (j) to hold it tight until the adhesive cures.

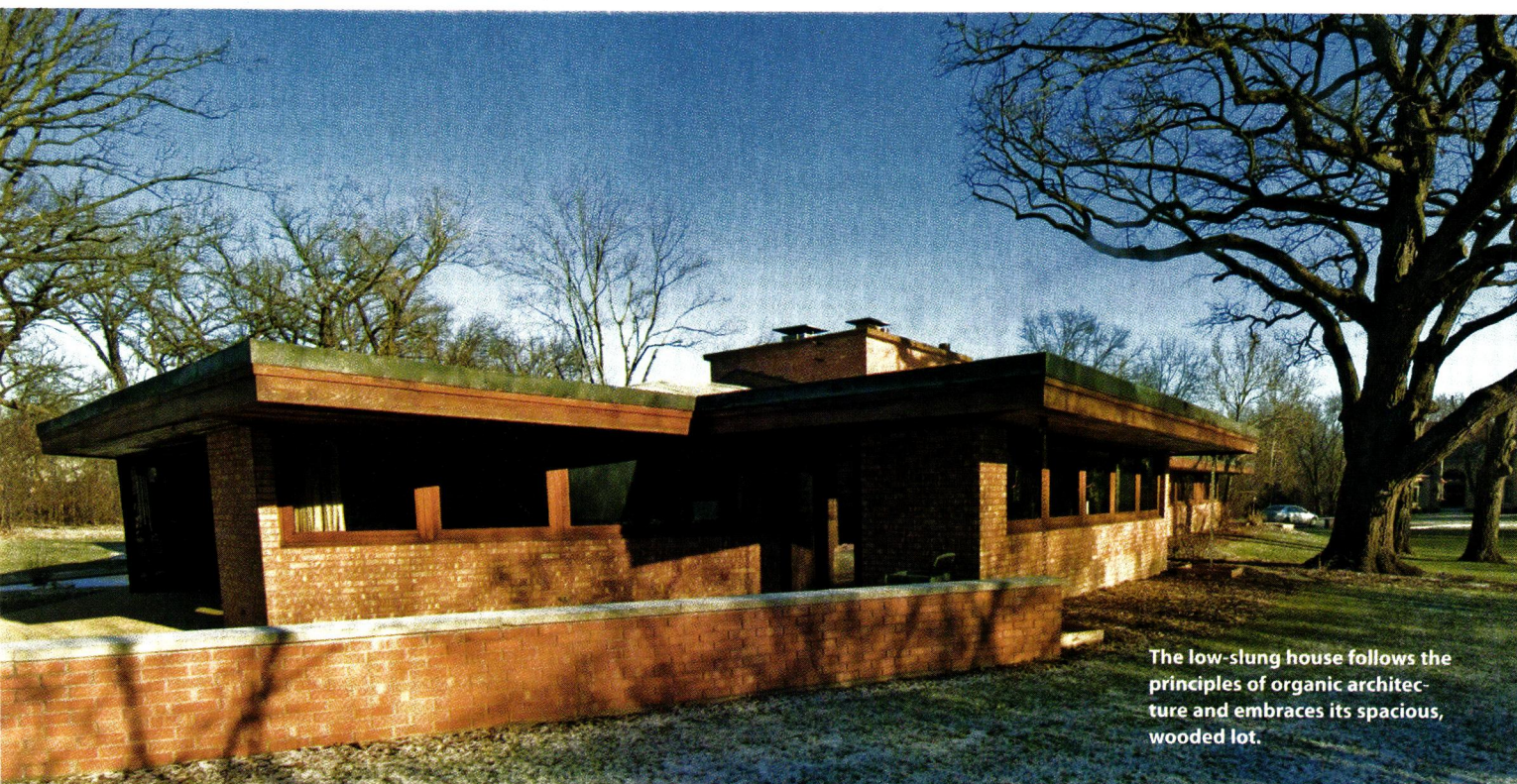
### 7 SAND

A light sanding completes the wood lap-joint splice repair, and it's ready to be painted.

*John Leeke is still working on his barn in Portland, Maine; his wife hopes he'll finish it one of these years. More details of this woodwork repair, the rest of the barn painting project, and other carpentry solutions can be found on his web site: [www.historichomeworks.com](http://www.historichomeworks.com).*







The low-slung house follows the principles of organic architecture and embraces its spacious, wooded lot.

# Humrich Maneuver

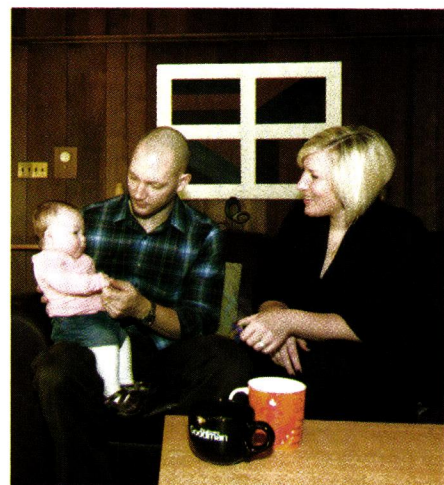
**Mid-century houses on large lots are being razed around the country; one young Chicago couple stands firm on preservation's modern frontier.**

STORY BY LEE BEY

Jennifer Nickerson spent much of her childhood playing in the mid-century-modernist houses of her classmates in Riverwoods, Illinois, an affluent suburb 30 miles north of downtown Chicago that harbors 40 residences designed by architect Edward Humrich.

Two of her best friends lived in Humrich homes. "I didn't know who Humrich was at the time—I was in first grade—but I remember walking the long hallways in their houses thinking, 'When I grow up, I want to live in a house like this.'"

And now she does. Jennifer and her



LEE BEY PHOTOS

Adam and Jennifer Nickerson took a break from restoration work (and fumes) when they learned they were expecting baby Ava.

husband, Adam—a design student and devotee of Frank Lloyd Wright's work—bought a Humrich-designed house in the village of Olympia Fields, just south of Chicago. And though they agree they are fortunate to have the house, the house is equally lucky to have the Nickersons. Built in 1956, it belongs to one of the most endangered ranks of architecture:



**CLOCKWISE:** The house is thoughtfully outfitted with a range of built-ins, including a wine rack and floor-to-ceiling storage in the dining room. The cooktop and stove are original, perfectly working Thermador appliances.

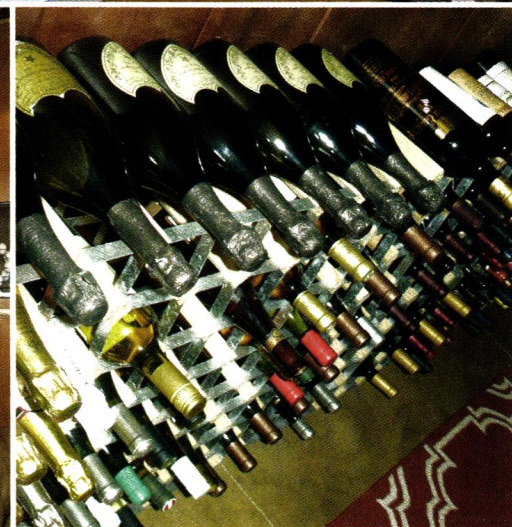
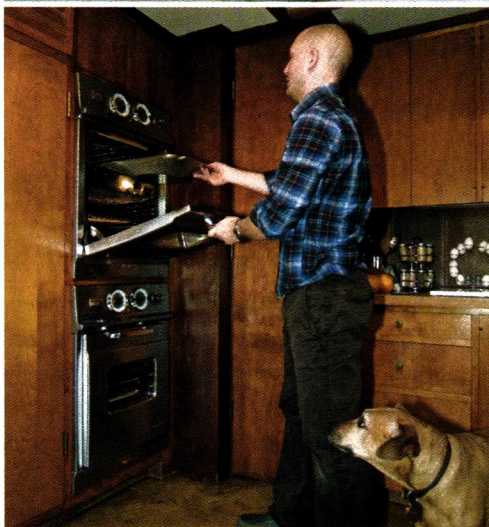
residential postwar modernism. Teardowns have claimed scores of significant modernist homes around Chicago over the past 15 years.

Modernist house appreciation is a niche, explains Jennifer Nickerson. "Many people see my house and exclaim, 'Look at that land. You could do so much more.' That's because everybody's got McMansion on the brain." But these houses are the new landmarks—almost as old as Queen Annes and other Victorians were during the heady days of preservation in the 1960s and 1970s.

## A Modern Enclave

Chicago's bounty of houses by Humrich and other modernists provides an interesting backstory to the tale of the city's architecture and American modernism in general. While mid-century skyscrapers by architectural powerhouses like Mies van der Rohe were being built to international acclaim downtown, away from the city a class of residential architects quietly worked in affluent postwar suburbia.

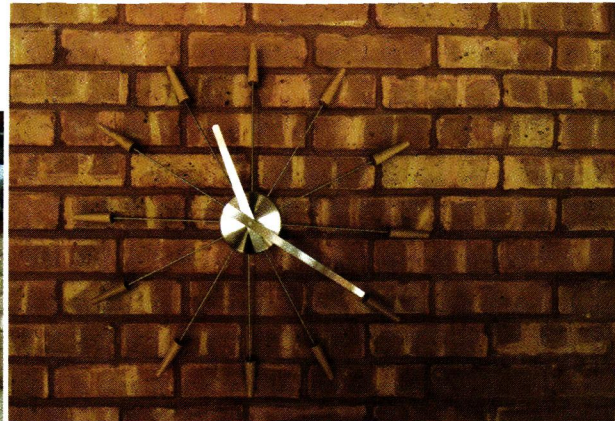
Much like Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie School and his later Usonian designs, these architects took the modernist aesthetic and made it conform to nature. They created one-of-a-kind houses that were low-slung; sited on large, wooded parcels; and featured generous amounts of glass for views and sunlight. Sometimes entire subdivisions were built, as was the case in Riverwoods, the town where Jennifer grew up, which boasts more of Humrich's work than any other locale. A half-century later, however, many contemporary buyers find it hard to warm up to the right-angled, experimental nature of some of the houses. And for buildings suffering from deferred maintenance, the price of repair and replacement can be steep. Today, modernist houses on large wooded plots of land in stable upper-middle-class and affluent areas of Chicago are sometimes even quietly marketed as teardowns.







**CLOCKWISE:** A massive fireplace spans nearly an entire wall of the living room; an integrated wall clock—dating to the house's construction—continues to keep perfect time; a three-season room has the same radiant-heat concrete floors as the rest of the house.



The original owner of the Nickersons' house, Eleanor Lieberman, refused to sell to an owner who would demolish it. Her selectiveness was warranted. Lieberman herself hired Humrich to design the house for her family—husband Saul and their three daughters—after seeing his work in Riverwoods. Her ties to the property run deeper still. Beginning in the 1950s, Lieberman's father, Edward Gray, developed the 150-acre Graymoor subdivision where the house sits. Graymoor was envisioned as a modernist residential community with minimum house prices of \$35,000—although the construction of Lieberman's home cost a then-staggering \$200,000—with designs reviewed by an architectural board. "Graymoor is not a typical subdivision," says Joe Kunkel, founder of Chicago Bauhaus & Beyond, a group devoted to preserving modernism. "There are

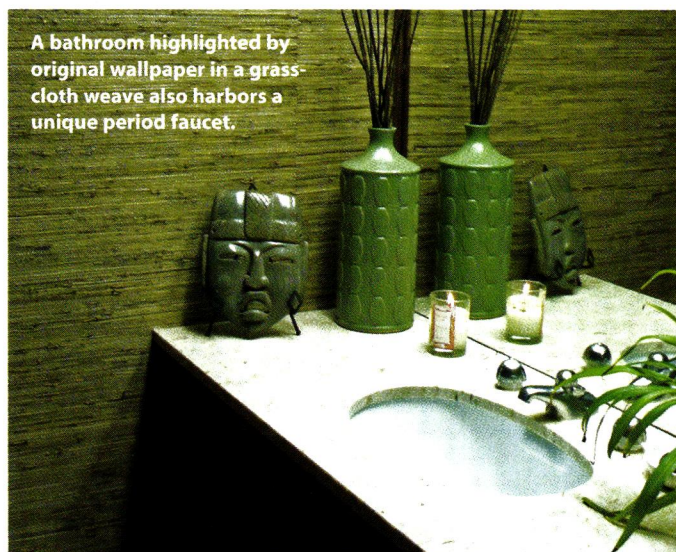
no repeated builder plans." Kunkel, by the way, is also the real estate agent who sold the house to the Nickersons. Though the subdivision remains largely intact, at least two original homes have been lost to McMansion fever in recent years. (One of these new builds is called the "Garage Mahal" by neighbors.)

"Lieberman was looking for the right family to take over this property," Jennifer says. "She wanted someone who would restore the house's integrity. We wanted to do it and knew its importance."

At first glance, Humrich's creation, a single-story, L-shaped house, is quiet and unassuming. Look again and the 3,700-square-foot house proves itself a spectacular example of mid-century modernism, inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright. There is cedar siding, an exterior of common brick, generous windows, and handsome, overhanging eaves that give the residence a sense of mystery and modernity. Inside, the home unwraps like a present, revealing rooms, light, form, and space that are only hinted at from the exterior. "Everybody says the same thing once they're inside," says Jennifer. "It's so humble from the street, buy once you're inside, it's like 'Holy cow! Who knew?' That's one of the things we love."

## Saving Grace

Jennifer and Adam found the house in 2006 while looking at real estate listings on the Internet. "We started clicking through more and more pictures, and when we saw the exterior shots, we were blown away," Jennifer remembers. They drove 30 miles to see the house that night—at 11p.m.

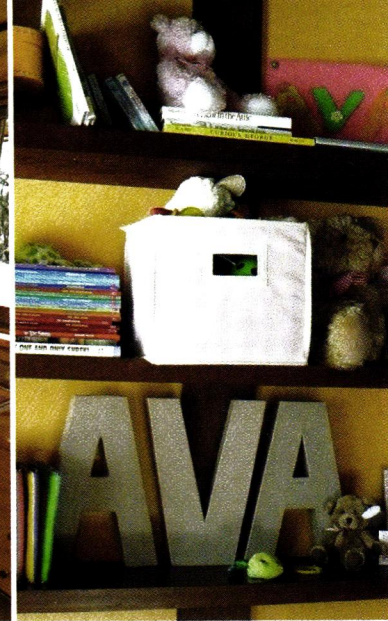


**A bathroom highlighted by original wallpaper in a grass-cloth weave also harbors a unique period faucet.**

TOP LEFT, BOTTOM LEFT, TOP RIGHT: CASSANDRA BEY; CENTER RIGHT: LEE BEY



**NEAR RIGHT:** In the master bedroom, the platform bed and cabinets were designed by the architect himself, and made of the same cedar that defines the entire building inside and out; ribbon windows ensconce the room in light. **FAR RIGHT:** In Ava's room, original bookshelves are used for creative storage solutions.



TOP LEFT, BOTTOM LEFT: LEE BEY; TOP RIGHT: CASSANDRA BEY

Adam and the family dog, Freddie, traverse a long exterior hallway that's one of Humrich's trademark architectural features. Flanked by floor-to-ceiling windows and French doors, the space shows off some of the woodworking that the couple continues to lovingly restore to its original luster.

The young couple had been married a mere 18 months when they bought the house, which was in remarkably solid condition. Humrich-designed cabinets and built-ins throughout the house still roll and move with the same crispness as the day they were built. The original electric double oven and cooktop range—early high-end appliances from Thermador—continue to operate.

Still, there was plenty of work to do, and the Nickersons knew they had to find solutions. “We became educated by researching articles online, reading, and listening to all these people who were supposed to know what they were taking about,” Jennifer said. They also relied on advice from her father, an electrician and jack-of-all-trades.

The biggest job was to breathe new life into the massive amounts of cedar siding and finishes inside and outside the house. The Nickersons interviewed six different companies before finding a contractor who could restore the home's weather-beaten and washed-out exterior wood.

“A lot of people wanted to stain the house,” Jennifer says. “We wanted the true color of the cedar to come out. We didn't want to throw something on top of it.”

The couple's contractor carefully sanded away the weathered first layer, bringing back the original color of the wood. The new surfaces were finished in clear stain and linseed oil. A few pieces of wood that had been infested by carpenter bees were replaced, but the new ones match seamlessly. Exterior brickwork was also tuck-pointed, with masons matching the pink hue of the original mortar perfectly.

The exterior was only the beginning. Cedar is the predominant material inside the house, too. The Nickersons themselves tackled the job of cleaning and hand-applying linseed oil. The fume-heavy work halted when the couple discovered they were expecting a baby in 2007. Once baby Ava arrived in the fall, the work resumed to complete her nursery.

All in all, the painstaking job required elbow grease, months of work and untold gallons of linseed oil. “Drums' worth,” Adam says. “We kept buying gallon (oil) drums.” “And it's still not done,” explains Jennifer. “It'll take a full year to finish the inside.”

But the result is worth the effort. The rejuvenated cedar gives the house a visual warmth and presence; natural light now skips across the surface of the wood. The couple also cleaned and repaired exterior concrete and oversaw restoration of a fish pond that doubles as a water feature for a three-season entertainment room.

The house is a comfortable, well-planned, and spacious place for the couple and their daughter, and it is filled with surprises. The dining room has an original wet bar with refrigerator that still functions. That room also features a Humrich-designed console cabinet with built-in record player.

“We don't leave our house on weekends,” says Jennifer. “We enjoy it that much. We just hang out in the environment we re-created.” 🏡

Writer and photographer **Lee Bey** was formerly the architecture critic for the *Chicago Sun-Times*.



The suburban ranch house, born in Southern California, boasts simple, utilitarian designs. Regional variations typically involved the choice of building materials, with stucco and stone prevalent in the West and brick a staple in the East.



# Ranch Days

*The sprawling emblems of the postwar lifestyle are now historic in their own right—mainly because there's been nothing like them since.*

Story by James C. Massey  
and Shirley Maxwell

**T**he ranch house, that ubiquitous little rectangle that dominated suburban neighborhoods in the 1950s and 1960s, is no longer the new kid on the block. At more than 50 years old, it has finally come into architectural majority—in fact, it has more than reached the cutoff point for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Perhaps that's why architectural historians, ever hungry for a fresh debate on period styles, are scrutinizing thousands of unpretentious ranch houses built when Elvis was in his heyday. Granted, very few of these will make the Register on their

TIM STREET-PORTER PHOTO





one-story massing; horizontal lines; low-pitched gable or hip roof with overhanging eaves; a long, shallow front porch or, alternatively, a recessed entrance porch; an attached garage jutting out ahead of the main block of the house—and, oh yes, a picture window in the living room and sliding-glass patio doors at the rear. Even when the typical linear or L-shaped footprint is varied to become a U (or a V), we have no trouble picking up on the overall ranch-ness of the design.

The next question is, why on earth do we call this suburban phenomenon a ranch house? If the phrase “California ranch house” rings a bell, you’re on the right track. Southern California was indeed the birthplace of this now-familiar form—not just once, but twice. That’s where the ranch house first evolved in the early to mid-19th century, and that’s where the ranch was reborn a century later.

Of course, 19th-century ranch houses really were located on ranches. Rural dwellings, they were simple, linear, unadorned adobe or frame structures that were most often (though not always) a single story high and a room or two deep, with one or more porches extending across the long front façade and sometimes on the back or sides of the house. Such porches (called *corredors*) provided sheltered access to every room, avoiding space-eating interior hallways. They also enlarged the house’s living space while opening each room to outdoor light and cooling breezes.

The layout of the early ranch houses was informal and usually asymmetrical, paying more respect to function than to style. Need a room? Simply add one on. The rambling L- or U-shaped houses that resulted from this practical design approach were easily expandable, as well as winningly picturesque. Patios, partly enclosed by the walls of the Ls and Us, offered refuge from the region’s harsh sun and wind. They also afforded privacy and an element of protection from intruders.

## Ranch Revival

In a very different time and setting, the 20th-century suburban ranch house also was informal and functional, attuned to the needs of growing families. In addition, it was inexpensive and quick to build, both vital considerations when the Baby Boom descended upon a housing market that had been stalled since the 1930s.

The idea of reviving the ranch house actually took shape long before the war. It first appeared mostly in the form of architect-designed, custom-built residences. Cliff May, a Los Angeles architect, is credited with having built the first modern-day ranch house in San Diego in 1932. May served as an architectural advisor to the influential *Sunset* magazine, which avidly promoted the ranch. In 1946, just in time to greet vets armed with G.I. Bill mortgages, the magazine published *Western Ranch Houses*, for which Cliff May contributed many of the designs. May wasn’t the only promoter of ranch design—many other architects, including San Francisco’s William Wurster, were intrigued by its possibilities—but it is May whose name has become inextricably linked with it.

individual merits. Most will be judged for their role as part of a historic district—as contributing resources, in official preservation parlance.

Each district might contain scores, hundreds, even thousands of houses that are no more imposing than—well, than the 1,000-square-foot “ranchburger” you grew up in, or the one your next-door neighbor tore down to build his 6,000-square-foot dream palace.

However, before you fall out of your La-Z-Boy laughing at the idea of a historic ranch house, take stock of where these fresh-faced houses came from, and what they’ve come to represent.

## Home on the Ranch

What exactly is a ranch house? With a little thought, most of us could probably tick off a list of ranch characteristics:

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An early 1950s advertisement in *House Beautiful* touts a ranch-style house built with plywood, a material that helped engineer the post-war building boom.





## Going Atomic

A mid-century modern is back in style.

Architectural purists might wince at the thought of calling ranch houses "historic." Which means they'll truly blanch at the so-called atomic ranch, a mid-century style characterized by modernist details, walls of glass and an open floor plan. Atomics have spawned a magazine and a book, and young and middle-aged hipsters (who've perhaps watched one too many Rat Pack movies) have pounced on the home style and transformed their ranches homes into bastions of cool. The appeal, according to *Atomic Ranch* author Michelle Gingeri-Brown, is their quantity: Roughly 75 percent of all homes built between Dwight Eisenhower's term in office and the breakup of the Beatles were constructed in some variation of ranch architecture. That's a lot of Formica and minimalism. The Atomic's open rooms, coupled with a footprint that eases expansion and renovation, also appeal to homebuyers today. And these updates are usually marked by utter whimsy, with a vibrant commingling of modern touches (radiant-heat concrete floors, aluminum windows) and the old bones of a wonderfully constructed house.

So, yes, ranches deserve our architectural attention, and when you "add in the variety of vernacular interpretations—split-level, modernist, traditional, storybook—the ease of one-level living, and their affordability, you have a housing stock with great legs," says Gingeri-Brown.

—Michael McCarthy



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ATOMIC RANCH



## Expanding the Ranch Range

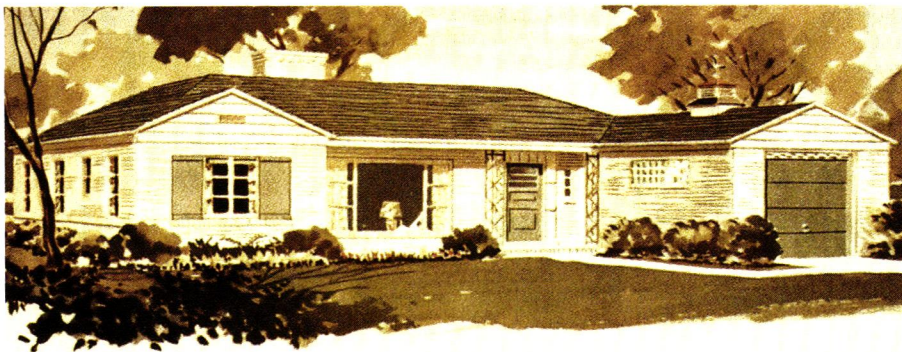
Of course, the ranch house craze didn't end at the California state line. Developers and builders in every part of the country found the designs easy to sell to eager consumers. Other magazines, from *Ladies Home Journal* to *American Home*, were quick to see the merits of the ranch house, and magazine competitions for ranch-house designs were rampant in the postwar years. Plans were offered for sale through special issues, catalogs, and plan books. However, it was the merchant builders—the producers of town-sized suburbs—who spread the ranch house across postwar America.

Not surprisingly, as ranch-house design moved out of the realm of the architectural ideal into the reality of speculative construction, architects and builders took many liberties with the original idea. Some observers particularly decried the popularity of such spread-out houses in regions where keeping warm in winter was more critical than the ranch's indoor-outdoor living opportunities.

In response to these criticisms, the house changed somewhat as it moved eastward and northward, and regional variations became common. In the cooler, damper climates of the Northeast, for instance, the ranch house profile tightened into what is now sometimes called a "massed ranch."

Building materials also changed over time and distance. A major feature of prototypical ranch house design was a mixture of building materials. Stone, stucco, vertical board-and-battens, clapboard siding, and brick were all popular, and as many as three of them might meet on a single façade. In the East, brick was a frequent choice for exterior walls.

Although the 1950s ranch house was typically small, the open floor plan, with its combined living and dining spaces and its large glass wall areas, went far to make up for its diminutive size. Glass patio doors put the spotlight on the rear of the house, where most family activities—backyard barbecues, children's games, grownups' cocktail parties—took place. The front door, in fact, was often



Front doors were often de-emphasized in the asymmetrical ranch-house façade. Large bay windows graced public areas, and smaller windows were used throughout the rest of home.

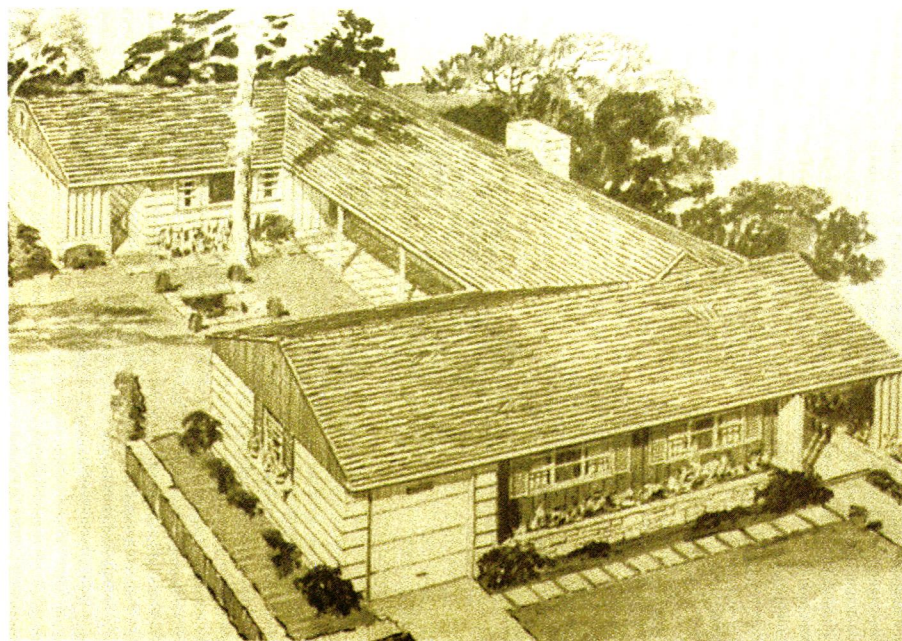
consciously de-emphasized in the asymmetrical ranch façade, so cleverly hidden in a side-facing projection that it was barely discernible from the street.

Gable roofs were most common—side gables on the long main block, front-facing ones on wings—but there were also a good many hip roofs. All had sheltering, overhanging eaves. Massive chimneys of stone or brick on the front walls also were enticing to families in search of warm, inviting spaces.

Windows were large in the public areas of the house but generally smaller and set high on the walls in the bedrooms. Steel casements, popular before the war, gradually gave way in the '50s

to aluminum windows of various sorts—sliders, double-hung, awning, or jalousie. The living room's picture window often consisted of a large center pane flanked by two sets of operable casement or awning windows.

Now this seemingly simple house is getting the kind of scrutiny from architectural historians that will likely yield the answers to a range of questions: How many different types of ranch houses are there? Is there a difference between a ranch house and a Rambler? What's the cutoff between a high-style ranch and a mid-style modern? Stay tuned—the architectural world's investigation has just begun. 🏠



Ranch-house layouts were informal and asymmetrical. Function definitely trumped style, as the L- or U-shaped homes were easily expandable. Patios, partly enclosed by the Ls and Us, offered refuge from the elements in new neighborhoods with few shade trees.



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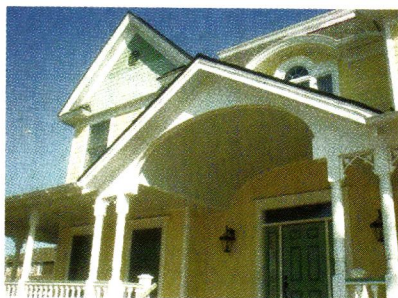
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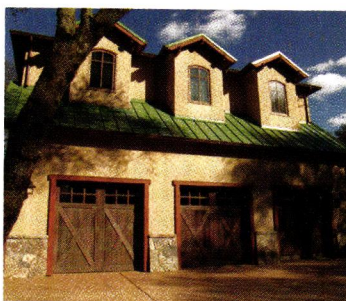


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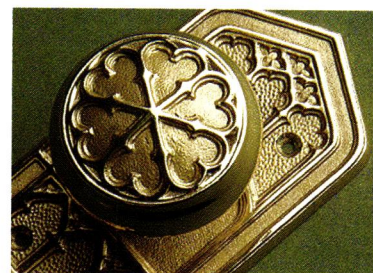
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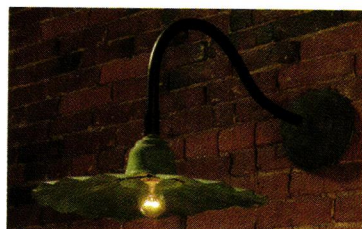


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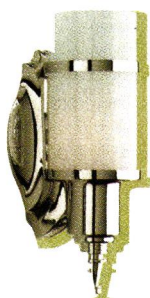


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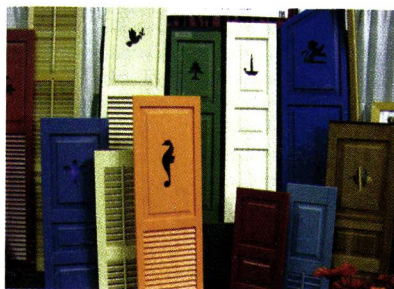
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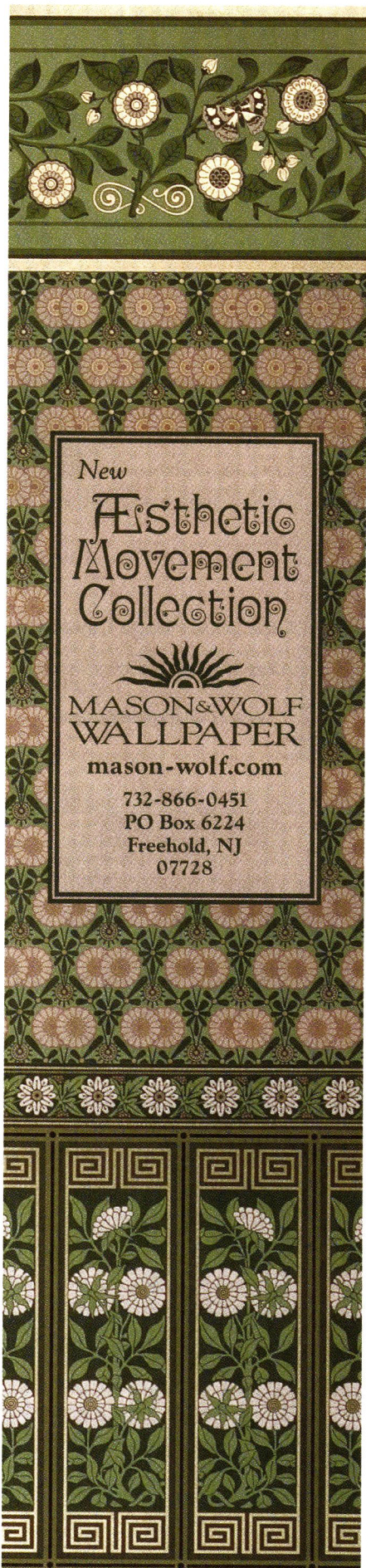
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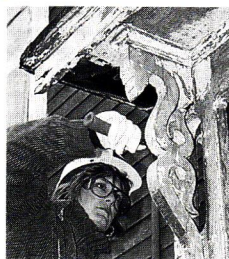
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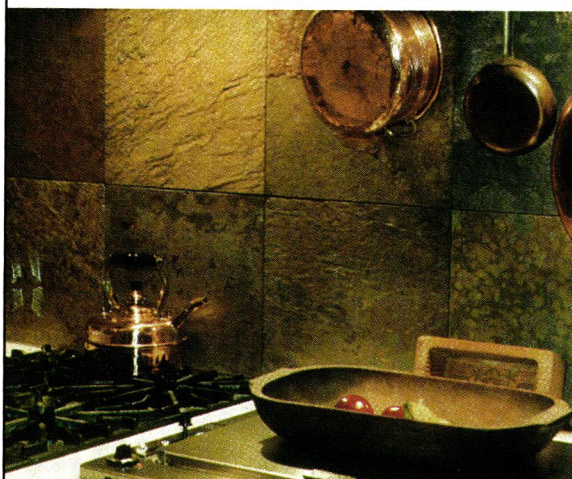
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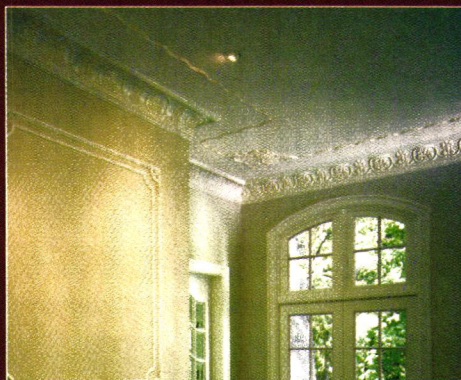
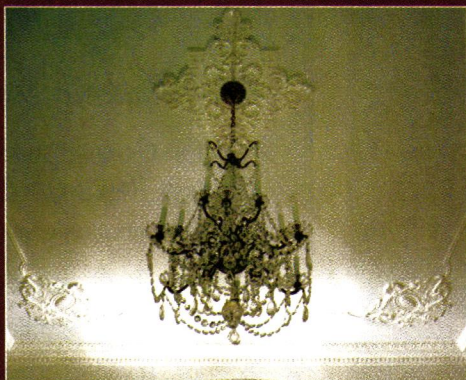


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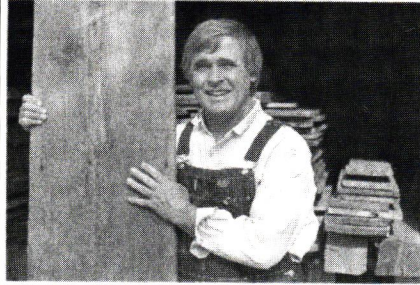
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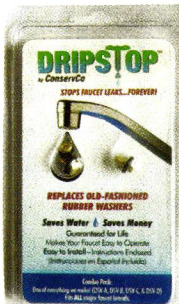


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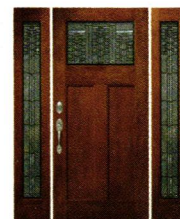
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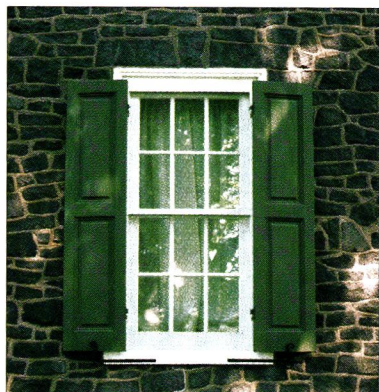
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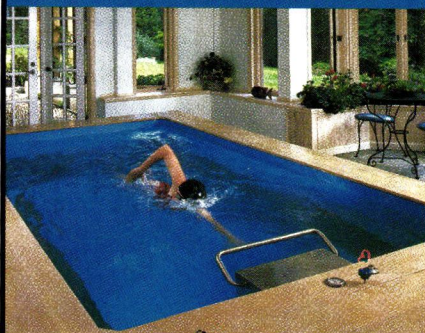


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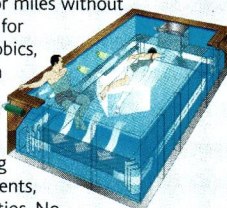
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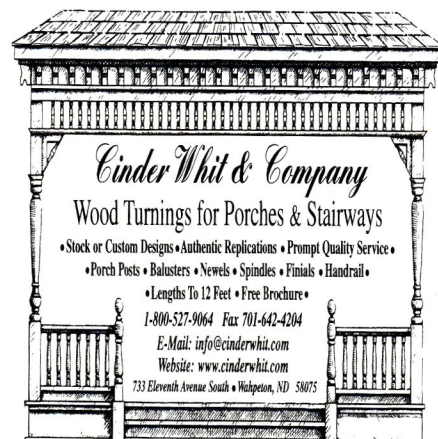


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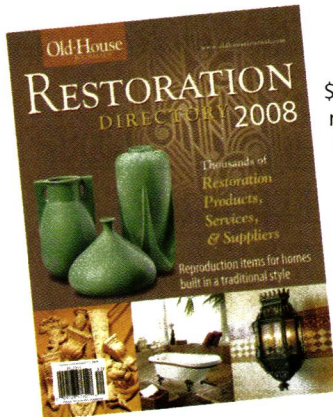


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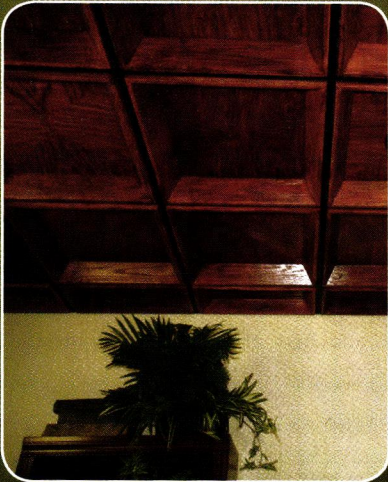
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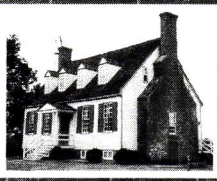
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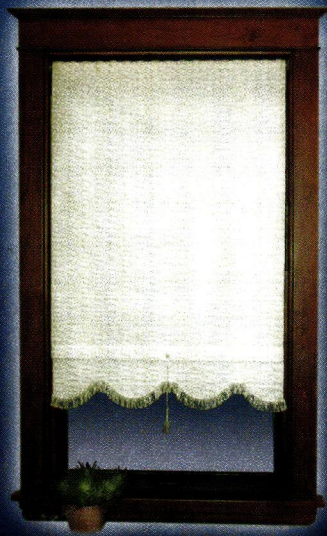
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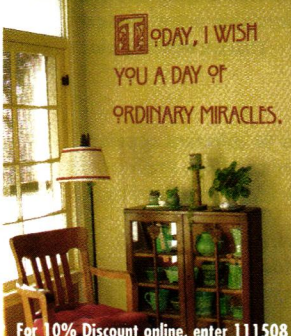
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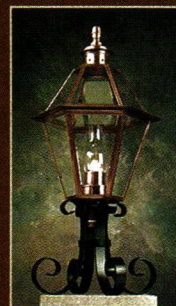
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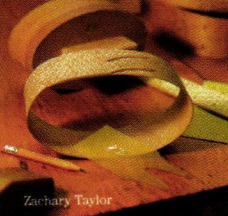
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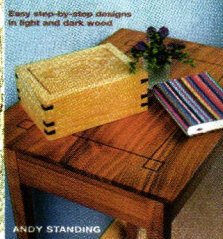
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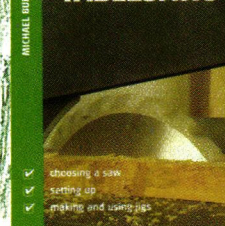
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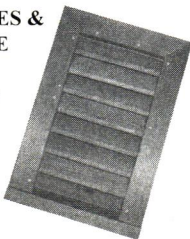
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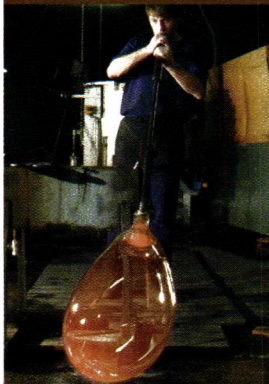


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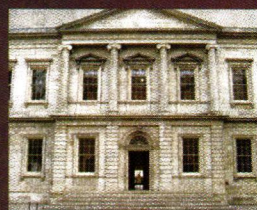
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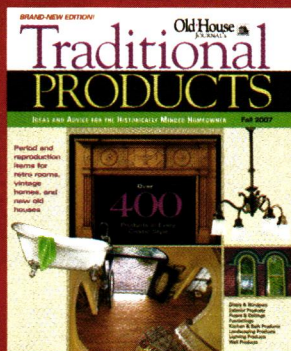
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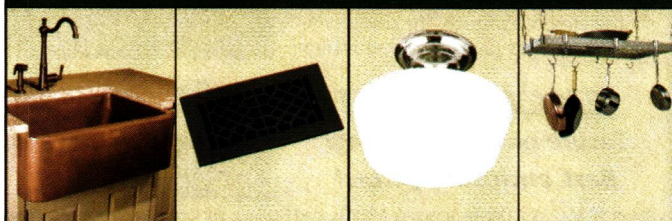
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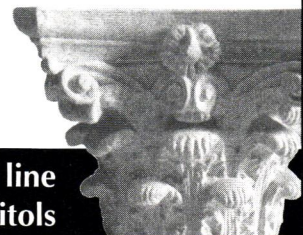
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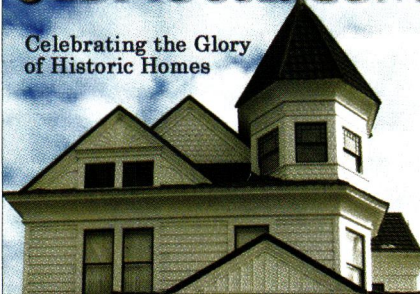
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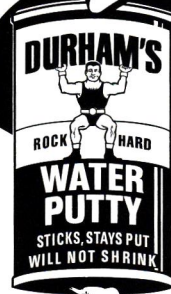
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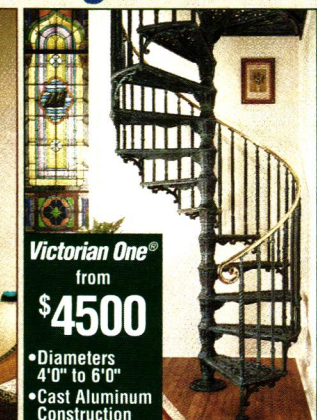
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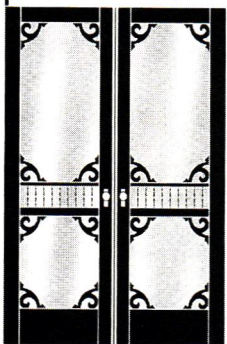
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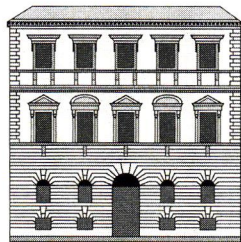
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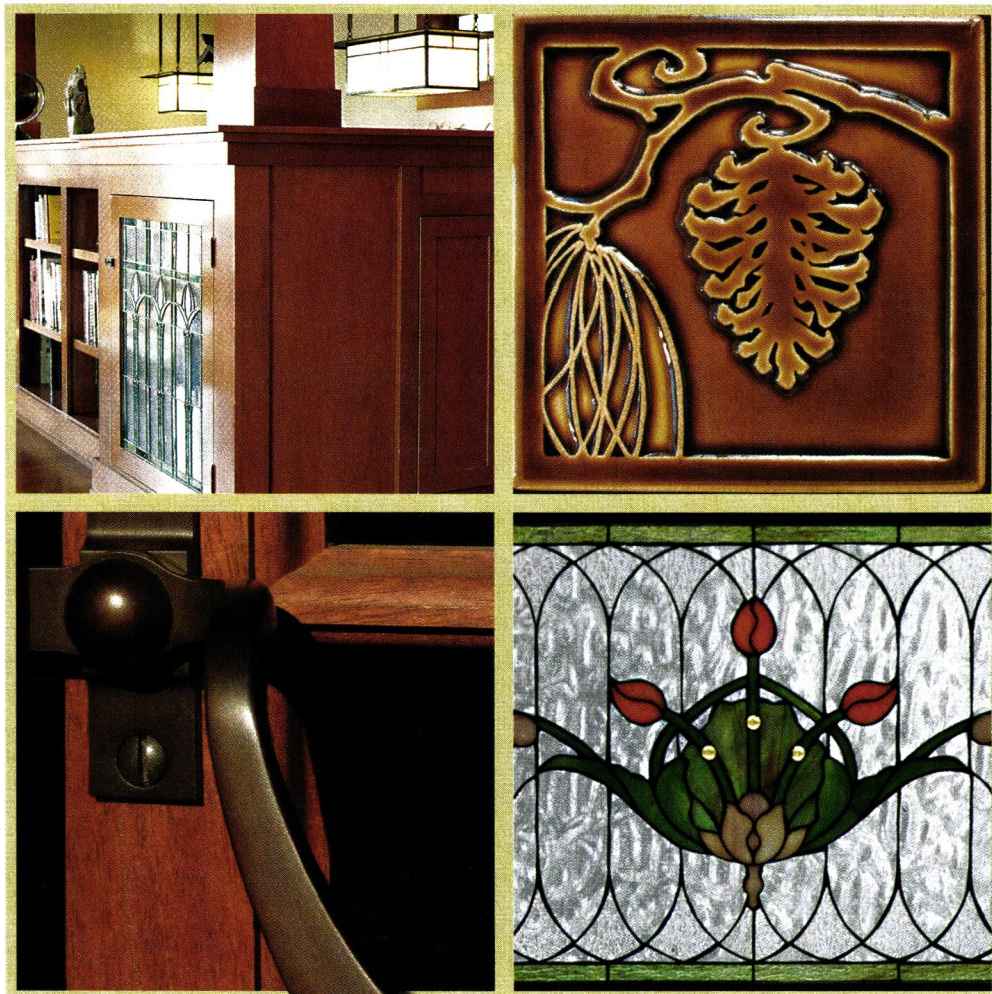


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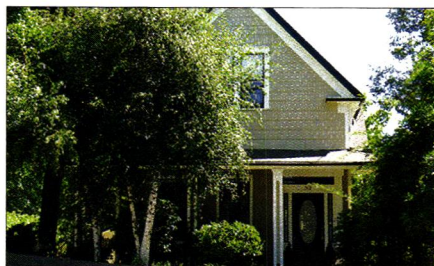
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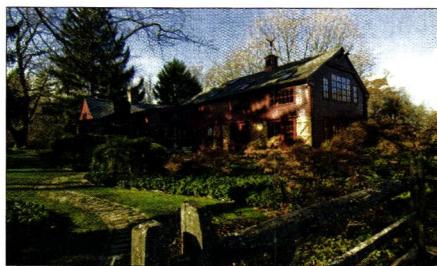
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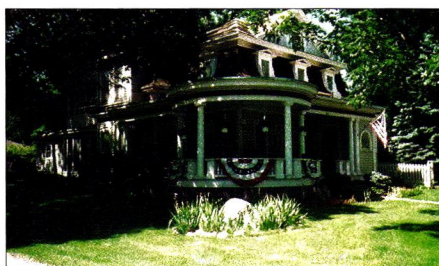
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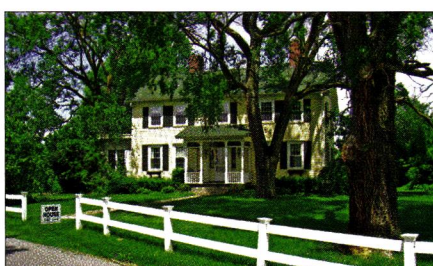
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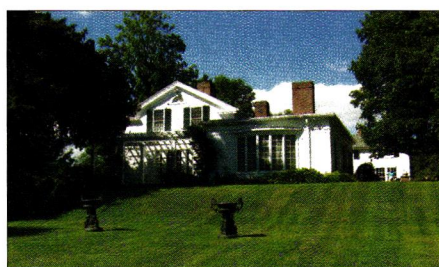
**BLAIR, NE**—1876 Historic Register home graces a brick paved street and is the pride of "Silk Stocking Row." Gracious living, Midwest values, great schools, 4 bedrooms with spacious master suite, 2+ baths. Updated, but well preserved, pristine woodwork, leaded windows and new kitchen. Double lot with 2-story carriage house. 20 miles from Omaha. \$350,000. Your Home Team, LLC, 402-426-5619.



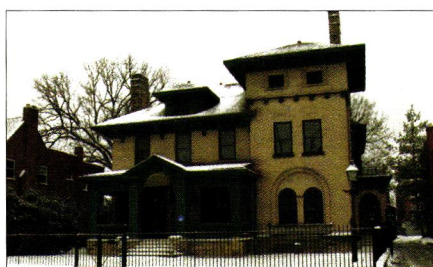
**DERRY, NH**—Circa 1820 Treasure. Colonial home boasts 3,440 sq. ft., 4 bedrooms, 3 baths, 5 fireplaces, stained glass, beehive fireplace in dining room, wide pine floors, turned staircase & much more. On 3 acres for \$329,900. United Country—800-999-1020, Ext. 108. [www.unitedcountry.com/oldAmericanTreasures](http://www.unitedcountry.com/oldAmericanTreasures)—a full color magazine of older and historic properties for sale. Just \$5.95.



**SCOTCH PLAINS, NJ**—This notable gem sits high on a knoll overlooking 2.24 acres moments from town and transportation. Elegantly appointed boasting the best of architectural design and amenities combined with a light infused floor plan. Updated kitchen, 6 generous bedrooms, 3 full baths, family room, formal living and dining rooms plus a finished basement and 9-car garage. 3 fireplaces. Covered veranda overlooking pool. \$1,374,900. Patricia O'Connor, Weichert, Realtors, 908-419-0374.



**MENDON, NY**—Twenty-five magnificent acres, 5,000 sq. ft. home with yesteryear charm and designs for today's lifestyle. For your enjoyment an herb and meditation garden, terrace, pond, trails, equestrian barn and workshop. The original structure was built by the Wesson Family (of Smith & Wesson). 20 minutes from Rochester Airport. Anne Justus or Tom Schnorr, Re/Max First, 585-756-7404. [ajustus@rochester.rr.com](mailto:ajustus@rochester.rr.com)



**COLUMBUS, OH**—1898 Tuscan style Kendall Mansion features a grand floor plan with 2 parlors, foyer and a beautiful turning staircase. Several different wood species are featured throughout the first floor public rooms. Home offers mature landscaping, a detached and heated 2-car garage and a separate finished 3rd floor, which could be a master, guest, teen or entertainment suite. \$399,900. Ken Wilcox, Carriage Trade Realty, 614-228-1939 or [ken@carriagetraderealty.com](mailto:ken@carriagetraderealty.com)



**BEDFORD, PA**—One of Bedford's finest residences! Newly renovated, this 1910 Arts and Crafts style home features new kitchen, master bath suite, 2-car attached garage, AC, wiring & plumbing and added insulation. Retains considerable charm with original American chestnut trim and floors, leaded glass windows, and distinctive wraparound porch. Near Bedford Springs Resort in upscale neighborhood. \$480,000. Jim or Jo Wehling, 814-623-9336, [Wehlingj@embarqmail.com](mailto:Wehlingj@embarqmail.com).





**CAMDEN, SC**—The Woolworth House. Exquisite 6,000 sq. ft. home, built 1935, features 5 bedrooms, 5½ baths, chestnut floors, gourmet kitchen, solarium and much more. Pool and carriage house. 35 minutes to Columbia, SC. \$1,250,000. United Country—800-999-1020, Ext. 108. [www.unitedcountry.com/old](http://www.unitedcountry.com/old) *American Treasures*—a full color magazine of older and historic properties for sale. Just \$5.95.



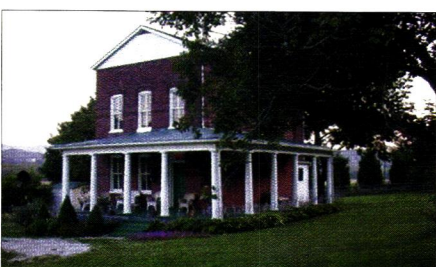
**PALESTINE, TX**—Stately Beauty. Late 1800s home features 2,805 sq. ft., 3 bedrooms, 2½ baths, pocket doors, 2 butler's pantries, staircases, sunroom and more. Garage & fenced yard. Home warranty & closing costs provided! \$94,500. United Country—800-999-1020, Ext. 108. [www.unitedcountry.com/old](http://www.unitedcountry.com/old) *American Treasures*—a full color magazine of older and historic properties for sale. Just \$5.95.



**KEYSVILLE, VA**—The Hagg House. Large Colonial Revival circa 1900 situated on 45 acres. Much of the old charm remains. Hardwood floors and original moldings throughout. Five bedrooms including master bedroom downstairs with private bath. 15 acres of open pastures with pond and woods that buffer the property on two sides. Various out-buildings round out this wonderful setting. \$399,000. Max Sempowski, Antique Properties, 434-391-4855. [www.oldhouseproperties.com](http://www.oldhouseproperties.com)

## SPOTLIGHT HOUSE

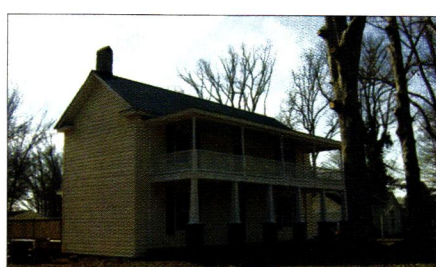
**TAPPAHANNOCK, VA**—WoodFarm, late 1700s gambrel home rescued and re-sited by HistoricProperties.com. Gorgeous woodwork: wainscoting, crown molding, dentil work, Chippendale staircase, and more. Needs kitchen and new systems. Repositioned on old brick English basement with full-height ceilings. One original chimney has been rebuilt. Backs onto large pond. 16.9 acres, 2 adjoining buildable parcels. 45 minutes to Richmond, 10 minutes to the Rappahannock River. Selling at cost with covenants. \$450,000. Sharon Hinson at 888-507-0501 or [Sharon@historicproperties.com](mailto:Sharon@historicproperties.com). [www.HistoricProperties.com](http://www.HistoricProperties.com)



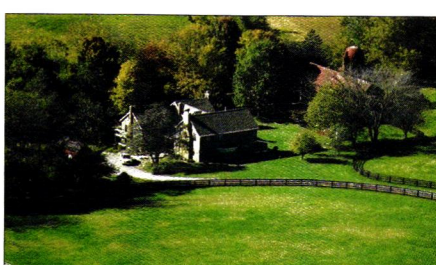
**BUCHANAN, VA**—Stout brick house on 1 acre circa 1875 looking out at the James in the distance and surrounded by mountains but yet a few minutes from town and I-81. Mostly restored with original woodwork, floors, mantels, etc. Fireplace, high ceilings and three bedrooms. Large front porch. One and a half baths. \$349,000. Dave Johnston, "The Old House Man®" 804-370-5302. [AntiqueProperties.com](http://AntiqueProperties.com)



**ROANOKE, VA**—The Buena Vista Mansion, circa 1900, consists of a main building, the north wing and multi-purpose one story annex. 14,809 sq. ft. Located in the heart of Roanoke's Jackson Park. The 23-acre park has a constant, gradual slope. The mansion sits at the crest of the site with 360-degree views of the valley. This home is for sale by bid and all reasonable proposals will be considered. Roanoke Parks and Recreation Department, 540-853-2236. View on [HistoricProperties.com](http://HistoricProperties.com)



**CLOVER, VA**—The Clark Property. Colonial Revival, circa 1910 on 1.07 acre, renovated with new mechanicals, HVAC, roof, kitchen, 3½ baths, downstairs master bedroom and bath. 29x41 building and 10x16 storage building. \$219,000. Separate 1,500 sq. ft. home with 5 bedrooms on 0.66 acre. \$109,000. Great 2 family opportunity or rental. City water and sewer. Buy both properties for \$299,000. Max Sempowski, Antique Properties, 434-391-4855. [www.oldhouseproperties.com](http://www.oldhouseproperties.com)



**WATERFORD, VA**—Wow, price reduced \$250,000—now \$949,000. Own a piece of history and fulfill the equestrian dream! Rosemont Farm offers 125+ acres of common grounds for riding. The wonderful stone farmhouse circa 1770 sits on over 5 acres with a large barn, storage buildings and complete fencing. The new addition is in keeping with the period. Gourmet kitchen boasts Viking stove, black granite and large island. A must see. Windy Harris, Carter Braxton, 703-554-3815.





## Sailing Away

It seems there's a sea of inspiration when it comes to expanding old houses, but sometimes the voyage to creating more room can get a little choppy. These two houses in a suburban 1920s neighborhood are a good example. One house (above, left) has all the hallmark features of Colonial Revival style, including a brick front, six-over-six windows, and an entry with broken pediment. The house next door (above, right) changes the existing building mass to add vertical wood siding, floor-to-ceiling windows, and an entry covered by what resembles a jib sail.

In the words of our contributor, "There appears to be a crow's nest overshadowing the front door." When old houses set sail on the waves of change, they'd better have a good compass. 🏠

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